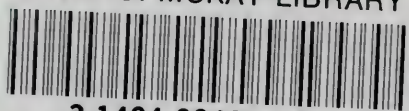




ARTHUR PORTER, Jr.

Community Builder
Man of Vision

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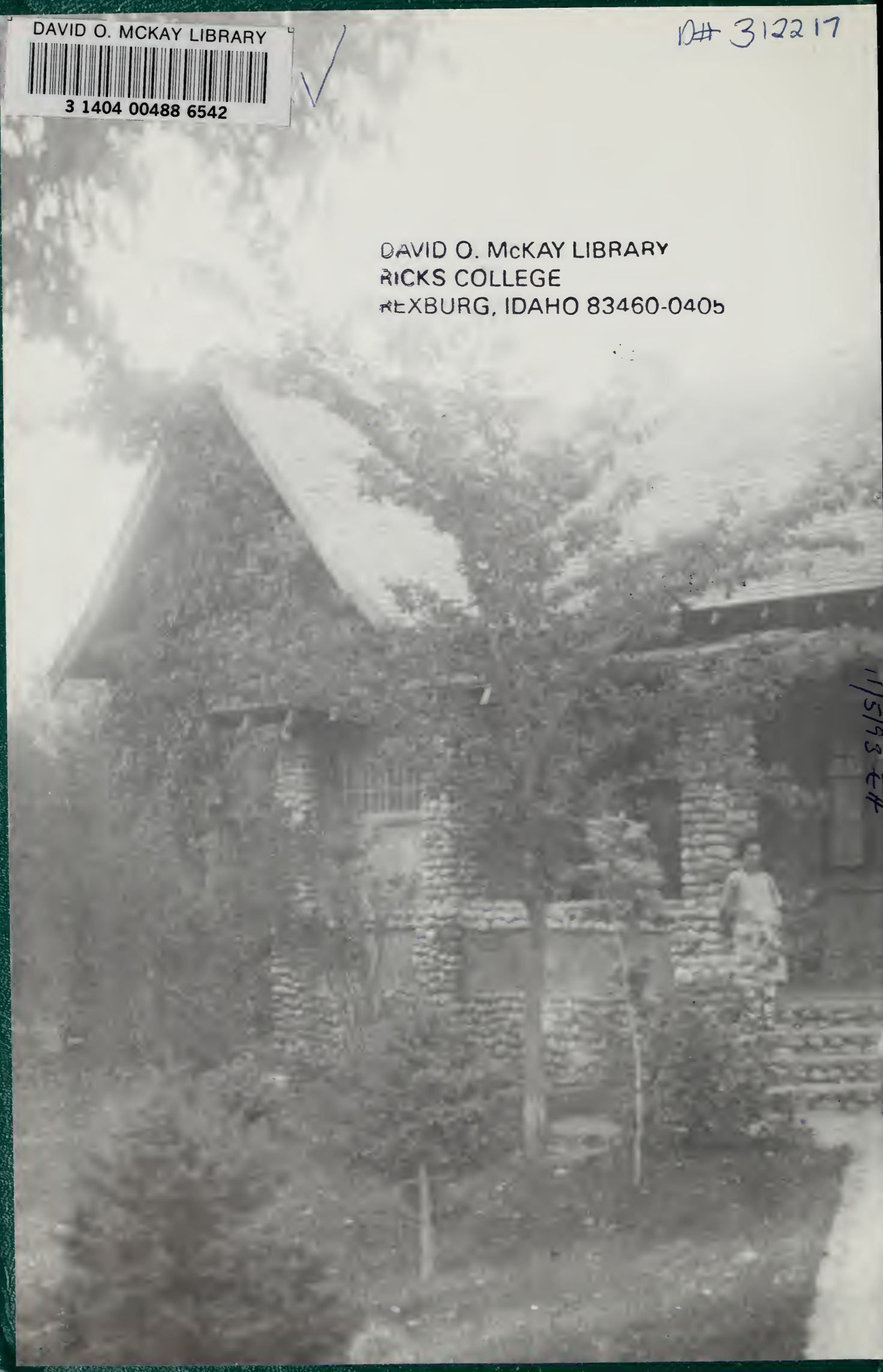


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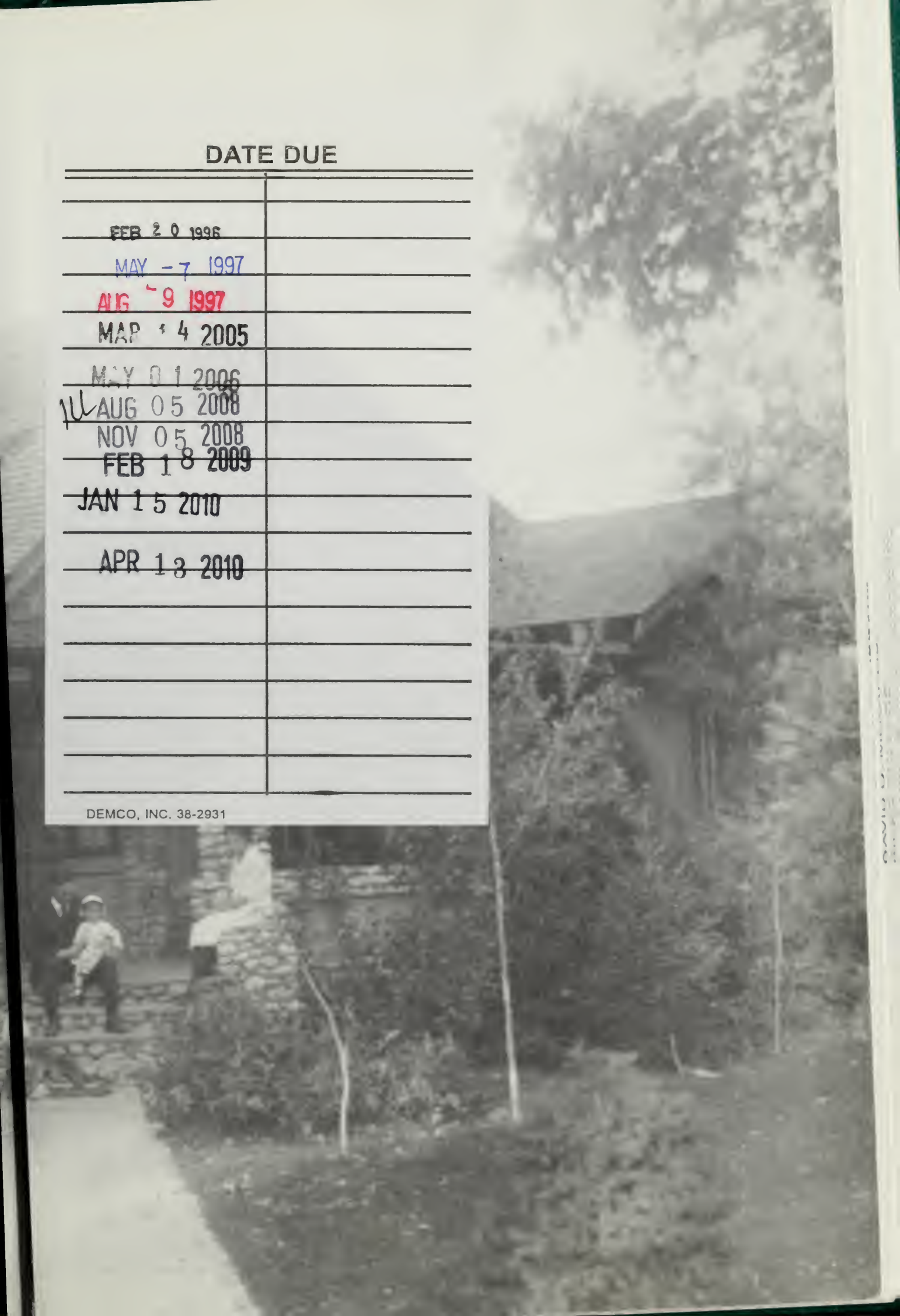
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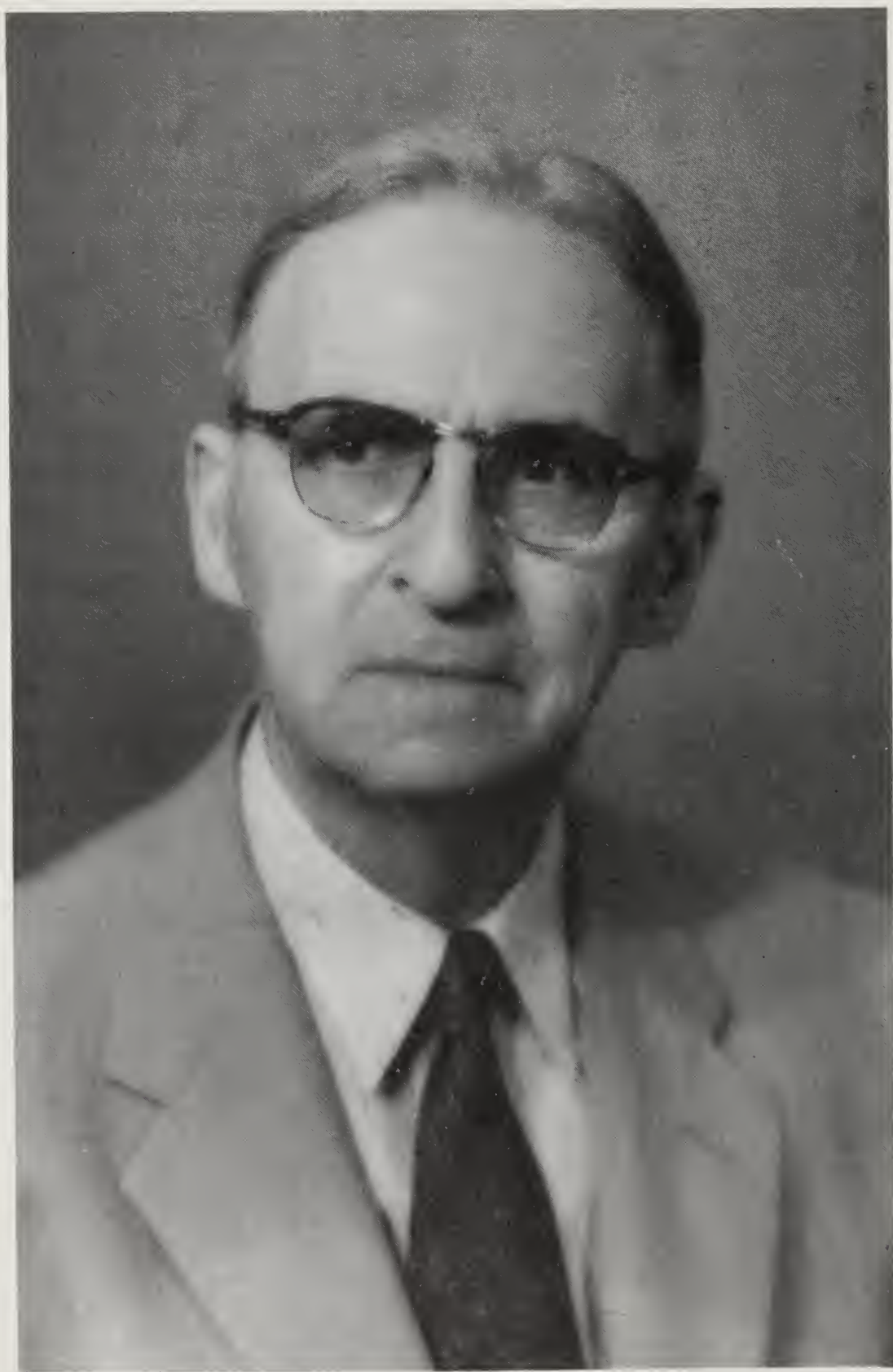
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Arthur Porter, Jr.
Community Builder
Man of Vision



Arthur Porter, Jr.
1950

Arthur Porter, Jr.
Community Builder
Man of Vision

Arthur Porter, Jr.
by David L. Crowder
Rexburg, Idaho

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Acknowledgements

From the time it was first talked about, this book has been a labor of love by the descendants of Arthur Porter. Now it is finished, special thanks should go to some of the family members. Most of all, we thank Mary Nell for her editing of and additions to the original Crowder Manuscript. Thanks also to Art L. for his very good suggestions. The pictures were gathered from many members of the family but JoAnn Richards and Bonnie Eldredge were particularly helpful with their well cared for collections. We appreciate Terrell and Kent Arnold for the work they have done in layout and printing.

Finally, to the one who did most of all, we dedicate this book, and say thanks to Nelle. Without her to rear the ten children and make his home a pleasant haven, our father would have had a difficult time achieving his remarkable career. In their sixty years together they were a perfect complement to each other. Between them they set an example for us to follow in almost every aspect of our lives. And now, we surely hope they approve of this book.

- by Ann Zollinger



Leighs Priory

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. From Birth to Rexburg 1876-1902	3
2. Family Man	27
3. Ricks Academy and Ricks College	47
4. Rexburg Religious Leader	67
5. Businessman	84
6. Commercial Club, Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club	101
7. County Fair Associations, Boy Scouts and Hospital Advisory Board	113
8. City Councilman 1913-1919	125
9. Mayor, First Term 1929-1931	143
10. Mayor, Second and Third Terms 1931-1935	165
11. House of Representatives 1943-1946	185
12. County Superintendent of Schools 1949-1953	199
13. Conclusion	207



Arthur Porter Jr. as a young boy

1

From Birth to Rexburg 1876-1902

If Arthur Porter, father of Arthur Porter, Jr., of this study had been the eldest son of John Porter instead of fourth surviving son, he would have inherited the family tenant farm of Leighs Priory, Essex County, England. The history of the Arthur Porter, Jr., family would have been drastically different. But laws of primogeniture in England in the mid-nineteenth century precluded any other than an eldest son from inheriting family land holdings. As a result, Arthur Porter would eventually become the founding father of the "Original American Porter Family."

Arthur (for the sake of differentiation, we shall use his first name) was born at Leighs Priory, November 29, 1841. His father was John Porter; his mother was Eliza Barnard. His father was a well-to-do tenant farmer and could supply necessities of life for his extensive family. Arthur was a sickly child which must have caused great concern to his parents as several of his siblings had died in infancy. He would survive childhood diseases and a near drowning. He obtained a rudimentary education from his sister Emily and from private schools at Braintree, some five miles from Leighs Priory.

Arthur's father had hopes for him to follow in the farming business. Arthur was given a small plot to cultivate and some pigs to raise. He was "quite successful with them."

Arthur's was a pious family, and his childhood was lived in a happy, Christian-oriented home. He was eighteen when he decided to strike out on his own and left for London. He worked in a department store for two years before he succumbed to blandishments of his brother Clement, who had emigrated to Australia some years previously. Arthur decided to go to Australia.

When Arthur told his family his plans for emigrating to another part of the British empire, his mother and sisters tried to dissuade him. He was not old enough, they felt, to go so far from home. His father allowed that Arthur could make up his own mind, but, if he was determined to go, his father would see that he "had a good outfit." Arthur later wrote: "I told them all that I had fully made up my mind, that sooner or later I should have to make my way in the world, and the opportunities were greater in a new country like Australia than they were in England."

Farewells were said, and Arthur left England on his twentieth birthday, November 29, 1861. Ninety-three days later his ship docked in Melbourne, Australia. He had enjoyed the trip with the exception of the first few days of seasickness.

When Arthur arrived in Australia, great gold rushes in that nation and in New Zealand were attracting world-wide attention. Arthur got caught up in the enthusiasm of gold hunting and "spent quite a few years at different times on the gold diggings and gained some experience which has been useful to me," he wrote. "The most important lesson I learned was that I had wasted a great deal of time that might have been more profitably employed."

After five years in Australia, Arthur traveled to New Zealand for a reunion with his brother Clement. He soon returned to Australia. There, on January 4, 1875, in Sofala, he married Louise Marie Koebbel, a young school teacher.

Louise Marie Koebbel was an "Aussie" by birth but non-English by parentage. She was born July 3, 1857, at Richmond, Victoria,

Australia. Her father was Johann Francis Koebbel, an Austrian. Her mother, Johanna Louisa Petschack, was of Polish and German descent.

Louise's parents intended to see that their children were baptized. This caused some initial conflict as her father was Catholic and wished the children baptized in that church; her mother was Lutheran and determined to have the children baptized in that faith. An amiable compromise was reached: the boys would be Catholics; the girls would be Lutherans. Hence, Louise became a member of the local Lutheran congregation.

Louise received a good education at a time when girls were not often encouraged in that direction. She soon demonstrated an unusual intelligence. She was, in fact, "so capable a student that at the age of fourteen she was made an assistant teacher. In her seventeenth year, following a severe oral test before a group of seven examiners, she was employed as a regular teacher. She was an excellent penman, wrote a bold Spencerian style, and was known all her life for accuracy in spelling." Her teaching career, hardly begun when Arthur Porter began courting her, ended when she married him. "Her parents did not approve of her choice of a husband (he was thirty-three years old; she was seventeen) so the couple left at once for New Zealand. Louise never again saw her native land nor any of her family. There was a mutual agreement between her and her husband that neither one of them would visit their native homes until they had sufficient means to visit both her home in Australia and his in England which, of course, did not occur."

The Porters arrived in New Zealand at just the wrong time. A severe depression played havoc with the economy. The young couple moved several times in the first ten years of their marriage to different places of employment. They lived in Oxford, Papanwa, Sydenham, Auckland, Aratapu, Alford Forest, and Christchurch.

Arthur and Louise anticipated the birth of their first child while living in Auckland in 1876. That child, a boy, was born on April 20, 1876. They named him Arthur Porter, Junior, and called him "Artie." He would be followed by one sister and three brothers, each born in a different New Zealand town.

Arthur Porter, Jr., (hereinafter noted as "Porter" unless some further clarification is needed) wrote in his "Autobiography" about his

nine years in New Zealand. His father was able to see that the family was fed — although at times there did not seem to be enough food to satisfy — and a roof was over their heads. On at least one occasion, while living in Alford Forest, the roof of the “one room shack” was so unstable that the children were taken to a neighbor’s house to sleep because Louise was afraid the roof would collapse on them. Arthur did cut some poles to prop up the roof, which eased the fears.

Occasionally Arthur would receive some money from the family in England. He was so generous that he would share the money with others in distress and the family “would soon be back on short rations.” Porter “was always aware of my parent’s financial problems and concerned for them,” he wrote. “This made me conservative in financial matters. While I have given to many causes, I never gave more than I could, with safety, afford.”

While the Porter family was living in a suburb of Christchurch, Arthur got a job at a nursery. That job was to provide a turning point in his life as he worked with Ola Larsen, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As the men became acquainted, they freely discussed religion. Larsen was persuasive and gave Arthur LDS tracts to read. Arthur took them home and read them and was favorably impressed. Louise read them also but was not so impressed.

“After a short time he was ready for baptism, and she appeared to be very prejudiced against him for being baptized,” notes an excerpt from Ola Larsen’s diary, but Porter “appointed a night for baptism. In the meantime, my wife had been talking a great deal to Mrs. Porter, and she had as much or more knowledge about the gospel as he but seemed to be very contrary and against him being baptized. The evening came that we had appointed. He made himself ready to go, and she made herself ready to go along. He asked her where she was going. She said she would go along and see that we did not drown him. We walked four miles to the place where we were going to perform the baptism. After we had had prayer, Brother Porter began to undress and get ready. Mrs. Porter did the same. He asked her what she was going to do. I told him she was going to be baptized, of course. He was so astonished that he did not know what to do and finally he commenced to cry for joy. She went into the water first and

both of them were baptized and confirmed the same night." The date was October 19, 1880. Almost eighteen months later, after a move to Alford Forest, son Arthur Porter, Jr. was baptized and confirmed by his father on April 2, 1884. All evidence indicates a thorough dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its tenets by the parents and by the son for the span of their lives.

The humble Porter home in Alford Forest provided the setting for occasional meetings of the small LDS branch. "I remember on one such occasion some other boys and I were chasing each other around and through the house," wrote Porter. "I attracted my parents' attention by saying 'Damn it, damn it,' as I ran after or away from the boys. I was called by them to explain how I came to use such language. I hardly knew where I had picked up swearing. Mother sent me to bed for the rest of the day. It was a severe punishment, not only because of the humiliation before the company who all seemed to feel the spirit of the devil was with me, but I was deprived of playing with the other children whom I seldom saw. I never forgot it."

Porter's reminiscence of his youth in Alford Forest is a study of life of the poor:

My memory of living at this house was of meager comforts and plain foods and practically no entertainment. We ate porridge, Scotch oatmeal, for breakfast, sometimes without sugar. We had very little butter. Instead of butter, Father would get a five gallon can of "drippings." This was a mixture of beef and other fats that we used to spread on our bread. It was fairly palatable, and I believe was quite generally used by the poor. We had very little milk, if any, and the same with fruit. We raised vegetables in the garden. For meat Father would buy a shank of beef or mutton and oftentimes fish or other seafood which was rather cheap there.

Later we moved to a better house with floors and several rooms, close to the forest. This did not need props but the chimney, made of boards on the outside, swayed a little in the wind. Father worked in the forest splitting rails and stakes (posts). It was contract work. One day when I went with him he earned twelve shillings (\$3). It was big money and I remember running home ahead to tell Mother the big news. As I was so out of breath and excited over the good fortune, she first feared an accident had happened to Father.

The forest was about twenty-five feet from our house. It was an interesting place for us to play. It was quite thickly grown right to the edge, mostly deciduous trees. The weather was temperate. It did snow once, the

first I ever remember seeing. We rolled snowballs and made a snow man but next day or so the snow disappeared. The trees consisted largely of birch and similar trees that were cut for posts and lumber. Also, a species similar to the palm but smaller. I used to fell some of the smaller trees and cut [them] into firewood so as to be a timber worker like Dad. I ricked my wood up like the timbermen did. I developed a liking for chopping wood that has continued throughout my life. It was part of my play as a child.

There were vines in the forest that grew luxuriantly, including the mistletoe. My brother Fred (four years younger) once got hung by the neck by climbing on these vines and slipping through. I called my mother to rescue him. The open ground was covered with grasses, etc.; one grass in bunches we called "tussocks."

I improvised a trap to catch "Maori hens," a good game bird about the size of a sage hen but taller. It could not fly but was a fast runner and a wary bird, brown-black in color. I don't remember ever getting one in my trap.

There were few LDS families in the Alford Forest Branch of the Church, but they provided some interesting memories: "In the spring (October or November there) we went to Ben Golly's, not far away, to pick wild strawberries which seemed delicious to us," wrote Porter. "Other LDS families living there were the Clarks, who had several boys near my age, and Charles and Peter Olsen and their father. Their [Olsen] mother and older brother did not join the Church. Also a family named Jeppesen who lived across the river. I remember when we held meetings they served us with butter as they had dairy cows. There was also an elderly couple named Simpson. They were childless. Brother Simpson used to get drunk and apostatize or at least was cut off the Church. His wife apostatized with him. Later they would repent and be rebaptized. As I remember, this experience was repeated several times."

Porter's youth was marred by overt "persecution and prejudice against Mormons" in Alford Forest. "I remember one Sunday a group of hoodlums gathered in front of our place while a meeting was being held there," he wrote. "They sang ribald songs about Mormons and Brigham Young and his 'forty wives.' Also, they derided Joseph Smith the Prophet. They also threw rocks at the house."

Porter had many pleasant memories of his childhood in New Zealand. He wrote in his reminiscences:

I remember one winter while living in Alford Forest [when] we had a snow storm once instead of the proverbial rains of winter. Plants and trees, ferns, flowers, shrubbery all grew luxuriantly. We sometimes went for a boat ride on the Avon River in Christchurch, the banks of which were beautiful with grass and flowers and trees and shrubs. On Sundays we [went] for a walk in the park with our parents. I remember especially the stately gum trees so abundant in New Zealand. Christmas occurred in [the] middle of summer. We would enjoy a picnic party with our friends. We would have special delicacies to eat, cakes, fruits, pies, "lollies" (candy), foot races and games. I remember winning a kaleidoscope one time that I prized highly.

Some of the missionaries who stayed at their house in Christchurch were William M. Bromley, Nicolas Harmon Grosbeck, Nathan Ricks, Walter Barber, Ira Hinckley, John Burnett, George Batt, and Ephraim Ralphs. Many of the families in their little branch later emigrated to the United States. Among these were Peter J. Nordstrand, Rogers family and the Harry Morrison family who later originated the Morrison Meat Pie Company in Salt Lake City.

Porter was fortunate that his mother had been a school teacher as she was able to fill in rather substantial gaps in her son's education. She taught him elementary German as well as reinforcing his reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. He had learned to converse in German in his early years as his mother spoke to him in both German and English when he was learning to talk, enabling him to be conversant in both languages.

Porter did not attend school in Alford Forest. "The missionaries had rather recommended that we would have better opportunities for being educated in Utah where we would have Mormon teachers. I found later that this was an exaggeration, a kind of booster talk. During this time I read the New Testament. Mother was a good speller and reader, traits that were impressed on me in a way that was profitable throughout my life."

His public school education in Christchurch, New Zealand, did leave him with some lasting memories:

I remember one incident that occurred to me when I was in the chart class (kindergarten). We children were standing in a half circle facing the chart. The teacher was teaching us the alphabet. The board of examiners were present on their visit to see how we were progressing. The teacher asked who could point out all the "T's" on the chart. There was a general

response and one was asked to point them out. After that, one or two volunteered to point out any other "T's" which the first had missed. I still had my hand up to indicate I could see some more. The teacher, rather dubiously, handed me the pointer. I went up and pointed out all the "T's" in a line or two of small print at the bottom of the chart. There was a smile on the faces of the examiners and the teacher promptly sent me to the head of the class.

The ability to perceive detail was a lifelong trait and, as Porter noted, "served me throughout the years, especially as a proofreader in my printing business which I operated for thirty-nine years. In my best days I could scan an ordinary book page and recognize all the errors."

Porter wrote about a "teacher named Miss Fee. She was a rather fussy elderly lady, quite stout. She had a system of punishing us for disorder by one or more strokes with a switch, according to the nature of the offense, on our outstretched hand. She was too tenderhearted to hurt us much so she beat us with light strokes. It did not improve the discipline as we mostly enjoyed the attention we got. We used to bring her suitable switches. I brought some nice skinned switches one day that I got at a place where my father was working for a basket maker. I felt well repaid when I rated several strokes with one of these nice white switches."

The most memorable of Porter's educational experiences occurred just a few months before the family left for America. "Three grades met in a long room each morning for opening devotional exercises," he explained.

Our seats were benches or forms arranged in ascending groups placed longitudinally along the room. A teacher stood in front of each class facing the pupils who stood with bowed heads and closed eyes during prayer. On one occasion, I lost interest as my teacher was offering prayer. I opened my eyes and must have seen something that caused me to smile. Immediately, when the prayer was ended, the teacher at the next form announced that I had been inattentive and out of order during prayer and ordered me to go to the master's office and report my misconduct.

Although I nearly fainted with fear, I made my way reluctantly through two or three rooms reserved for class recitations and finally arrived at the principal's room. I knocked at the door and was ushered in. The principal was teaching a class so I stood by the wall until he could inquire the

purpose of my visit. When he asked what I wanted, I explained about my inattention and said I was sorry. He told me to stand there facing the class until they were through and he had time to attend my case. So my agony was prolonged for an hour or longer, it seemed. He then armed himself with a long and strong pointer and asked me again a more detailed account of my misdeeds. He then started me back to my class and he followed, giving a healthy stroke with the pointer every time I slackened my pace. We were soon back where I had started from as I got going pretty fast and the strokes were fewer and lighter. I was not hurt much after all my anxiety. I have since thought Mr. Soundy did not think my misconduct was so serious an offense as to deserve his attention and time, and he probably told the teacher so. He had graver problems.

Almost from the time Arthur and Louise were baptized, they planned on emigrating to Utah, the heart of Zion, if they could somehow save enough money. Arthur understood that his family in England could not help them. He was saddened by the reception of a letter with the news that his father had died. But he was surprised to receive in the same letter a substantial amount of money which he considered a blessing from heaven. The amount was between \$1,500 and \$2,000 and provided the means whereby he could take his family to America. But first he had some debts to clear up, transportation expenses to pay, and he felt compelled to share his good fortune with the Ola Larsen family. He would give them enough money to supplement the money they had saved to get them to San Francisco. "He said he had made a promise before God years before that, if he would get more money than would take his family over, he would help us," wrote Larsen. "He said that the Lord had opened up his way wonderfully and he would fulfill his promise. He said that six months before it looked like he would not get anything, but it changed suddenly and went in his favor, and so he had enough money to emigrate both families at least to San Francisco." Porter wrote in his "Autobiography" that his father was also "able to let Charles and Peter Olsen have some money for them to emigrate in the same company. Father had been the means of converting Charles Olsen."

Porter was not quite ten years old when the voyage to America began on July 16, 1885. The Porter and Larsen families traveled from Christchurch to Lyttleton where they boarded the *Mauretania* to sail

across Cook Strait to Auckland, arriving on July 20. On July 21, 1885, they boarded the steamer *Zealandia* for the month-long trip to America.

Porter states that "the trip was hard on the family, especially on Mother and Flo [sister] and Franklin [brother] who were very sick part of the time."

He also states that "the Larsen family, all girls, were more popular with the sailors than we were, all boys but one. The sailors played up to the Larsen girls, giving them bottles of jam, etc. There was one severe storm enroute and some of the equipment was washed off the deck. We had to be locked downstairs until the storm subsided which made us all seasick. I was not very sick but Mother and the younger children suffered severely. On one occasion, just as tables were set, the ship lurched on to one side and everything went on the floor. When the ship righted itself and tipped the other way, all the food and dishes rolled over the floor to the other side. It was some time before the place was cleaned up and ready to proceed with the meal and many were too sick to participate."

The tedium and seasickness of the voyage were interrupted by a brief stop at Honolulu, Hawaii. They were there about nine hours and had time to walk around part of the city and buy some bananas. At that time Honolulu, with nearby Pearl Harbor, was little more than a refueling stop in the Pacific Ocean.

The ocean voyage ended in San Francisco where there was about a week's delay as the Larsen's awaited money being sent from a son-in-law in Logan. During the week, the Porter's lived in a "cheap apartment." Porter continues: "San Francisco still had boardwalks." But they got to ride the cable cars to Golden Gate Park where they "spent an enjoyable day."

For the nine year old, the "trip by train to Utah was the most tedious. The country was mostly desert and uninteresting. The weather was hot. The car was crowded and no place to relax. There were occasional delays. We were glad to finally dismount at Corinne one morning." Ephraim Ralphs of Brigham City was at Corinne to meet the Porter family. Ralphs had been a missionary in New Zealand and had stayed at the Porter home. Arthur had contacted him about

helping them when they got to Utah. The Porters stayed with the Ralphs family for a week and were treated most generously.

The Porters moved into a house in the northwestern part of Brigham City. Porter was delighted to be allowed to go around barefooted and even wade in the nearby canal. "One day while wading in this canal I saw a water snake glide over the water," he recalled. "There are no snakes native in New Zealand, only seen there in cages. To see a serpent loose gave me a terrible fright. I ran home at top speed thinking my life was at stake. On the way home I met my brother Fred and started him running home too. I think Mother was just as scared as we were and to think snakes were running loose in our vicinity!"

The Porters soon settled down on a small farm rented on shares from Eli Jenson. The farm was west of Brigham City near the Great Salt Lake. They had a house, some fruit trees, a cow to milk, and horses and equipment to run the farm. The family had arrived in Brigham City with about \$1.50 total cash. Now the prospects seemed good to raise some crops, sell them, and increase the cash. However, "the farm was not very productive," Porter noted, "or Father was not very capable at farming. We had a small crop which we shared with the owner. The farm produce we sold brought a small price and that was used for barest necessities. Cash was very scarce. It was hard to get enough to buy stamps or drugs. Trading was largely by exchanging supplies."

In the fall, the family hoped to have some income from selling molasses they had made from boiling sugar cane. They had received a share of molasses for their pay for making it but found there was no market as everyone else in the area had their own molasses. As a result, the family ended up eating the molasses on about everything. "I have never liked molasses since," noted Porter.

The Brigham City farm provided the nine-year-old boy with some learning experiences in the school of hard knocks:

While still in Brigham I had a number of accidents while trying to learn about farm animals. One of the teams of horses we worked was a mare with a young colt. When Father led the mare for a drink of water at noon, the colt did not follow. I thought it was sick or tired. I went behind it and, putting both hands on its rump, gave it a little push. It immediately went

into action, kicking me on the chin, one foot cutting a gash to the bone and it scampered off to join its mother. Father had to stop work and take me to the doctor and get the wound taped up.

A few days later I was riding behind another kid on a horse. When the horse began to trot, I fell off and landed on my face. The wound was broken open and worse than ever. When it was repaired I was "grounded" for awhile until the wound was safely healed. The scar remains visible to this day. [Porter's experiences with horses would cause him to discourage his children from riding horses.]

My next adventure was with a heifer that I was assigned to take to water about a half-block distant. I attached a rope to a halter to lead it. Sometimes she would get a frisky streak and break away. I would sometimes have trouble chasing her back in the barn so I decided to tie the rope around my waist so she couldn't get away from me. Luckily, the rope was a long one. The heifer, when through drinking, started on one of her frisky runs without noticing how I was doing. I ran as fast as I could but finally stumbled and fell. She was a big heifer and did not stop because I was dragging. She finally ran into the barn and stopped when she got to her stall. Luckily, the rope was a long one but I had got in the doorway before I came to a stop. I got untangled and, as soon as possible, complained to the heifer and went in the house for Mother to help me clean up the wounds. The third finger of my right hand was out of joint at the knuckle. It hurt so bad I wouldn't let anyone touch it. It was about three months before it got so I could bend it. It is still out of joint, a little wider than normal, slightly stiff, but doesn't hurt.

While the family was living in Willard, Porter had another accident with a team of horses in which he was dragged. As a result of this accident, he lost part of the middle finger on his right hand. The wound did not heal properly and infection developed. It was necessary to go to another doctor to have the wound properly cleaned and the finger was removed to the second joint. (His children often asked him to show them the stub of this finger and viewed it as an object of great respect and curiosity.)

Porter enrolled in the public school in Brigham City. The system was not graded the same as had been the New Zealand system. When Porter left New Zealand, he was in the "high first grade or reader." When he was tested on the first, second, and third readers in Brigham City, they were too easy for him so he was placed in the fourth grade class. "So I missed or passed the second and third grades by crossing

the ocean," he commented. He was not too impressed with the school, considering it "generally inferior" to the last school he attended in New Zealand. Part of Porter's assessment of the Brigham City school may have stemmed from the fact that he had to withstand a certain amount of teasing as that "English kid." He also tried to explain to his classmates the proper pronunciation of the "Queen's English." He said, "I tried to show them by the dictionary that I was mostly right and they were mostly wrong. I did not change their minds or pronunciation." He did, eventually, accommodate his pronunciation to local usage although throughout his life he was noted for good diction.

Porter was somewhat of a trial to "Miss Turner," one of his teachers. In his writings he states:

Miss Turner was somewhat old-maidish in her ways. She had odd ways of disciplining us. Johnny Burt and I were her worst problems. She would have us stand in the window sill on one leg. Of course, she would have to help us. We would fall on her the first few times she got us in position and would go through the process again. The trouble she had with us brought laughter from the other kids and did not reform us. In fact, we were perhaps flattered by the entertainment we helped provide.

Because I was looking out the window one day, she came and slipped her arm through mine and promenaded me around and pointed out the sights to be seen at the windows. She never once laid hands on us roughly or with a stick. There were problems with other kids, but she considered Johnny and me the worst. Meanwhile, we did indifferent studying. I feel ashamed today when I think of my conduct and the record I made in the school of this gentle woman. It is the worst record I ever made in school. In later life, when this lady lived for a time in a town where I was living, I did not reveal my identity as one of the little savages of her school that year in Brigham City. I was ten years old when a member of that class.

The Porter lease on the Jenson farm lasted for one year. When the lease expired, the family moved "south seven miles to Willard City." They lived in town and rented a farm some distance away. They lived there two years. In Willard, Porter came under the tutelage of Clark Hubbard, principal of the school. Hubbard encouraged Porter to accelerate his studies as he was capable of doing the work in the next higher class. Hubbard got Porter started reading "a series of history books that were in the school library." Porter "read them all." Porter

wrote that he "enjoyed this school and teacher as one of the best elementary schools I attended."

Porter was thirteen years old when the family moved to Logan, Utah. He was in the "fifth reader" in school in the class of James Langton. Langton was an "excellent teacher" and Porter responded by doing well in his studies.

In Logan the Porter family lived in a home called the "Villet Place" which was near the Brigham Young College. Daughters Emily and Bessie were born there. They moved again to a one-room log building in which they lived until about 1906. Emily Porter Heath (a sister to Arthur Porter, Jr.) describes this home as follows: "The logs were chinked with clay and whitewashed on the inside. By the time they sold the home to move to Idaho, the house had four rooms downstairs and four rooms upstairs. Downstairs there was a parlor (front room), a large family-style kitchen, and two bedrooms. There was also a cooking porch off the kitchen that they used in the summer. Mother called it a shanty. It had a pump with a wooden sink. They could pump the water from the well, and it would spill into the sink. This was considered to be very convenient. They also had beds in the shanty. The upstairs had two bedrooms that were 'finished' and two that were not 'finished.' The 'finished' rooms were lined with overall material that had been sewn together and then tacked to the walls. The covering for the floors [was] done the same way. They had a rug braided from rags on the front room floor. The front room was also 'finished.'"

Emily continues: "They took their baths in the 'shanty' room. In the winter time, they spent most of their time in the kitchen where it was warm. They had some outbuildings and an outside toilet. Their lot was joined by another lot called the 'John Phillips place'. [This place] was a lot the same size as the Porter place. The two lots went through from street to street. They used the 'John Phillips place' to raise a vegetable garden. John Phillips was one of the converts who came to America with the Porters and the Larsons."

In a short personal record written by Porter in 1961 he comments on his early boyhood in Utah as follows: "As a boy [I] helped Father on the farm. Worked at Logan Nursery under Ola Larsen. Also worked as glazier's helper with Ola Larsen. Also worked as printer's devil at the

Logan Daily Nation. Also as clerk at Roueche's Grocery Store in Logan. (All influenced [my] later life)."

At age fourteen, Porter enrolled in the Brigham Young College preparatory course — somewhat analogous to high school. He was a serious student and performed well. The next year he enrolled at Utah State Agricultural College in Logan. He had to pass a special examination to attend at age fifteen, sixteen being the accepted minimum age. His curriculum included arithmetic, algebra, grammar, rhetoric, literature, German, shopwork, drawing, and mechanical drawing — a heavy load for a fifteen year old. His transcript demonstrates the scope of the young man's intellect. He received an "A" in every course except one. He received a "B" in drawing. At the end of the term in the spring of 1892, W. H. Bell, the registrar, noted on the transcript that "this student is entitled to an honorable dismissal from the Utah State Agricultural College."

In the fall of 1892, Porter enrolled in Brigham Young College, Logan, at the urging of his father who felt the influence of a church-sponsored school was definitely preferable to the public agricultural college. Despite Porter's record at the agricultural college, he had to enroll in the freshman class at Brigham Young College as the agricultural college classes were not accepted by Brigham Young College.

Porter graduated from Brigham Young College in June 1896. He was twenty years old. He earned "A's" and "B's" in most of his classes which were heavily slanted toward physical and natural sciences and languages. Of course, he also studied theology. He was awarded the bachelor of science degree. He would later do postgraduate studies at Brigham Young College, the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and the University of Utah. He developed the habit of thorough study, a habit which he maintained throughout his life.

One of Porter's classmates at Brigham Young College was Frank Thatcher. Porter noted that "he was the richest boy and I the poorest boy" at college, "that is, that was the financial difference of our fathers." Porter met Thatcher forty years later in the Idamont Hotel in Rexburg. Thatcher had "lost his job at Montgomery Ward during the depression and is now beyond the age of being reemployed, as he told me. He is selling socks and other wearing apparel, taking orders. I

purchased six pairs of socks." Porter, with some relish, noted that Thatcher was "quite grey and remarked with surprise that I am not."

Porter expected to apply to teach in some public school system. However, before he embarked on that career, he accepted a mission call to the European mission. He was assigned to Switzerland. The "Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" notes that he was set apart as a missionary on December 4, 1896.

Porter delineated his missionary experiences to friends in Salt Lake City who made the letters available to the *Deseret Evening News*. The letters also became a part of the "Journal History." The first letter, dated November 24, 1897, appeared in the *Deseret Evening News* on January 8, 1898 and was sent to "a well-known resident of this city," who remained unidentified.

Dear Brother:

Often since on a mission here in Switzerland I have thought of you and your family and your great kindness and help to me when I was in Salt Lake City about to leave for a mission to Europe. I should have written you much sooner, but I have a great deal of correspondence to do and can hardly find time for letter writing in connection with my duties here. In a few days more it will have been a year since I left Salt Lake City, so my time is beginning to count now.

When I reached here last January, after a pleasant voyage, I was placed to work in Biel in the Jura conference of West Switzerland. Here I started to learn to speak German as that is the prevailing language. A month later, just as I was beginning to speak with some ease, I was moved to Chaux de Fouds in French Switzerland as it was thought I would soon learn French, too, as I had learned the two languages in the Brigham Young College at Logan. I was put to live with a French family, and two months later spoke French with considerable ease. [Porter found that the quickest way to learn the language well was to spend time in the public parks talking to children.] Since then I have labored mainly with the French, though I often have to speak German, too, and, when the arrangement of these Swiss conferences was changed recently, I was included in what is called the French conference which includes all the French-speaking part of Switzerland and some little of France. However, we are practically unable to do anything in France yet as their laws are unfavorable to us.

For four months past I have labored alone in Neuchatel where I was sent August 1 to open up missionary work. It has been many years since missionaries resided in this little city before I came, and at first I was almost

an entire stranger as there were only three members here, and they were about asleep as to the gospel.

Soon after coming here I started tracting from house to house, preaching this gospel of the kingdom wherever anyone would listen to me. At first it was a very difficult task for me as I was all alone here and felt some timidity. But I put my trust in God and tried to do my duty as I understood it, and I gradually became bolder and bolder in the work until I began to like it.

The people here live in large tenement houses, usually two families on a floor. I always go to the top of the building and tract from door to door as I go down the stairs. By this means, if I get chased anywhere, it is all on my way. I ring the door bell and, when it is answered, I announce my message and give a tract to the person answering, requesting he or she to read it and tell them I will call again, and, if they will receive me and listen to me, I explain further on this gospel that has been again restored to earth and give them another tract. Thus, I visit time after time until they will admit me no longer, and then I go again sometimes even when forbidden. I have thus found some earnest investigators after truth and have made a number of friends. However, while many listen and tell me it is true and say they know it is of God, they do not seem to want to go to the trouble of changing from their present condition. They seem to think they are doing well enough if they live morally and do not bother their heads much whether or not they have the true religion among them. It is often discouraging to me, but "Many are called, but few are chosen."

My experiences are quite varied at times. There are many kinds of people in the world with many peculiar ways of treating a person, and all this tends to make tracting sufficiently interesting to keep it from getting monotonous. Sometimes I am very well received and other times have the door slammed at me. In most cases, however, people will listen to me at the door. Nearly two months ago an article about me appeared in a little paper called the *Ane*. The paper has a pretty wide circulation but is not much thought of as it annoys everybody. In this article, headed "Mormon Propaganda," they gave a pretty tough account of me and my methods of proselyting here in Neuchatel. It finished by a fervent appeal to all fathers to "throw him down stairs, squarely, if ever he attempts to enter your house." However, no one has attempted that yet. It described me as "a being all dressed in black, resembling a raven of sinister augury," a "dirty Mormon," an "illuminated sensual," etc., and stated that I was here to lead astray the wives and daughters of Neuchatel. I don't think they did me any particular harm and it furnished some amusement for me and my friends here.

My district to labor in also embraces considerable of the surrounding country where we have some few Saints. I make trips around the district monthly as near as possible, visiting Saints and investigators. Once a month

I hold meetings at Lamboing, a little village about fifteen miles from here, where we have two or three families of Saints. There is lots of walking to do in laboring in the country districts. Sometimes I have to walk twenty to twenty-five miles a day several days in succession, and sometimes I get rather lonely at it alone. I hold meetings here at Neuchatel once or twice a month but no strangers come.

We are five elders in this conference now with Brother George L. Grachl of Brigham City as our conference president. We are obliged to work single-handed thus as we are so few in numbers. We see each other at intervals as this is but a small country and the cities are not very far apart. We need lots of missionaries here, but it is hard to find anyone who has studied the French language. I have been greatly blessed of the Lord in my language and now speak French fluently and with a good accent. It is a beautiful little land and reminds me strikingly of my own mountain home in the blessed land of Zion.

I have been much blessed on my mission with good health and protection from harm, and my testimony of the truth of this work has been abundantly strengthened. I rejoice that I am thus privileged to take part in this great latter-day work, and I ever pray my Heavenly Father to keep me humble and worthy to bear trials and persecutions for righteousness' sake. The work is ever progressing in this quarter of the Lord's vineyard, and we are endeavoring to preach the gospel to everybody. We cannot always see the immediate fruits of our work, but we sow the seed and God will see to the harvest. Converts are added from time to time in different parts of the mission, and, altogether, a great work is being done.

Missionary life is different here to what it used to be in New Zealand. We are not allowed to travel without purse or scrip but must pay for all we get. Thanks to the kindly providence of our Heavenly Father, I have not wanted so far for necessities nor have I any fears in that respect while I do my duty. We are promised that, if we seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, all other things will be added; and so I have found it.

Your friend and brother in the everlasting covenant,

(Signed) Arthur Porter
 Chez M. Fritz Weber
 Au Plan 14
 Neuchatel, Switzerland

The second letter was published in the *Deseret Evening News* on July 20, 1898:

Elder Arthur Porter, Jr., writing to a friend in this city from Geneva, Switzerland, says:

I suppose you are having considerable excitement over the present war [the Spanish-American War]. We read the dispatches here every day with interest to see what developments are taking place. The recent troubles in Italy have also added interest to the topics of the day. There seems to be a temporary calm again for a time, but without a doubt, that government is very unsettled. Italy is so very close to us here, much closer than Salt Lake City is to Logan, that we came nearly being right in the "swim" of things. While I was in Lausanne at the beginning of the month (May), the Italians there, who are very numerous in these Swiss cities, collected on the market place and made quite a demonstration by excited discussions, etc. We can expect just such trouble to take place. Wars and rumors of wars will desolate the earth and that day is not far distant when God will pour out His judgments on the wicked who reject Him and His servants in their efforts to present them the gospel.

I have been very gratified to notice the improved interest that has been taken lately among the members of the Church in living up to the gospel and keeping the commandments of God. I have been interested in reading of the MIA missionary efforts among the young men and women and of other efforts to call us to a sense of our duty, and, from all I hear and read, that must have been productive of very much good. We would be even more blessed if we would always obey the teachings of the gospel and the counsel of our leaders.

As regards missionary life, it continues much the same, of course. After laboring nine months in Neuchatel, I was removed down to Geneva where I came the beginning of this month to preside over the branch. We are two elders here. Geneva is a city of about 85,000 inhabitants. Its position, age, and reputation make it naturally a very cosmopolitan city, and it is also very worldly. Very little respect is had for the Sabbath Day. There is a great deal of drinking and gaiety here. Since here, I have already been out tracting besides becoming acquainted with investigators and friends. The people seem to me very indifferent to religion. At present, there is a popular orator here, Frank Thomas, who draws the majority of church goers to hear him as he is eloquent and knows how to say such things as will tickle their ears and console their consciences. There are, however, here and there honest souls whom we find from time to time and who accept our welcome message.

Efforts are being made now to introduce the gospel in France again. Elder Theo. Nystrom was sent to Paris about two weeks ago to do what he could to open up headquarters there. We can't tell what the result will be. It is a long while since any elders labored there, and they had so little success that it was abandoned. Perhaps they will be better prepared to receive the message now.

(Signed) Arthur Porter
Geneva, Switzerland

Elder Porter served for two and one-half years in the European mission. His service concluded in mid-June 1899. Instead of returning home immediately, he traveled in Europe for several weeks, "visiting widely in Switzerland, Germany, and England and also in France, Italy, Belgium, and Holland." While in England he visited Leighs Priory, the birthplace of his father. He also visited relatives and acquired some genealogy. While traveling in Germany, he took the train to Pommerzig, a small town in East Prussia," and found members of his mother's family. He was also able to collect some genealogy on his Polish and German ancestors. The travel and collection of genealogy were sources of great satisfaction to him.

Porter returned home in the fall in time to begin teaching school in Lewiston, Utah. He was assigned to teach the third, fourth, and fifth grades. He taught sixty-four students in the three grades and was paid \$45 per month for the seven-month term.

During the summer of 1900, Porter and his brother Tom went to Baker, Oregon. They spent the summer working in the Eccles sawmill. Porter "worked at the cut-off saw cutting unmarketable lumber into coal doors."

Porter joined the faculty of Oneida Stake Academy in Preston, Idaho, for the term of 1900. The academy had been established in 1888 as part of the LDS Church educational system. The academy, first located in Franklin, Idaho's first permanent settlement, was, in two years, moved to the larger city at the north end of Cache Valley. By the time Porter started teaching, a modern building had been completed. He taught the third, fourth, and fifth grades and was paid \$50 per month. During winter term he taught high school classes to teenagers and men and women in their early twenties.

He briefly interrupted his teaching at the academy to marry Gertrude Paull of Logan. They had courted for some time and were married in the Logan Temple on November 7, 1900. They lived in Preston but visited in Logan frequently.

In August 1901, Porter was appointed to the Oneida County Board of Examiners. He thus had to travel throughout the county to

check on progress being made in the county schools. On Wednesday, August 21, he was in Malad to administer a teachers' examination. Writing about the experience Porter noted:

I required the teachers to sit in separate seats and proceeded to hand out the questions. There were two men present who were not taking the exam as they held life certificates. When I asked the purpose of their attendance, they explained that they were there to "coach" the teachers who couldn't answer the questions. They claimed this had been their practice for a number of years, and that teachers needing their assistance paid them a fee. I promptly dismissed them. I learned afterward from the resident member of the board from whom I had obtained the questions sent by the state superintendent, that this practice had indeed been allowed, just as they said.

When I read the papers, I decided to recommend failing three teachers. When the county superintendent arrived next day, I reported my findings, and together we went over the papers of these three. The superintendent was a kindly and sympathetic man. He agreed that I was right in the way I rated their scholarly attainments, but he said that these folks all had contracts signed, and it was now too late to replace them. Their schools would not be able to open if we did not give them certificates. They had small groups of pupils. So, we signed certificates for all. We told the weak teachers of their lack of education and warned them to do some studying before the next exam.

The foregoing incident was, of course, not typical and was due probably to laxity on the part of the superintendent. City schools, I believe, attracted the better teachers.

For the 1901-02 academy school year, Porter was appointed secretary to Edwin Cutler, principal. As such, Porter saw to the printing of circulars giving information about the institution as well as maintaining a record of school activities.

Not long after the term started in the fall of 1901, a smallpox epidemic swept the area. The school was closed and public meetings were forbidden until such time as medical authorities deemed the epidemic had run its course. By November 15, the academy was operating again and most students had returned.

Porter and his wife spent Christmas of 1901 with her family in Logan. He left shortly after Christmas to attend a meeting of the Utah State Teachers' Association in Salt Lake City. Next he attended meetings of the Church School Teachers' Convention. He returned to

Logan, then traveled on to Preston early in January 1902 in time to teach the winter term.

When school concluded early in June 1902, Porter went to Logan to attend summer school at Brigham Young College. He did postgraduate study, and, at the conclusion of the session, was awarded another degree — bachelor of divinity.

Porter did not return to teach at Oneida Stake Academy in the fall of 1902 because, he said, conditions were “unsatisfactory” and he “had accepted a position at Ricks Academy” in Rexburg. Principal Edwin Cutler wrote a “To whom it may concern” letter of recommendation for Porter dated April 23, 1902. “I take pleasure in recommending Prof. Arthur Porter, Jr., as a faithful, energetic, and progressive teacher with high aims and character beyond reproach,” he wrote. “He has taught during the past two years in the Oneida Stake Academy giving excellent satisfaction and showing exceptional efficiency in his special subjects (mathematics and languages). His work in other lines is also worthy of high commendation.”

The Preston Ward was reorganized early in 1901 and B. Rogers was called to be bishop. Bishop Rogers called Porter to be the ward Sunday School superintendent. The bishop called Joseph Nelson and James Smith to be counselors. Porter, of course, accepted the call, but he had some initial misgivings about his counselors. “I was twenty-five,” Porter recalled, “and these men were each about twice my age. The bishop asked me to take these two men as he seemed to have no other place to appoint them.” The men had “strong personalities and seemed to me rather formidable counselors for a youthful looking superintendent.” Porter “was pleasantly surprised that they accepted me wholeheartedly, almost affectionately. I could not have chosen better or more loyal support. We held meetings at my home (weekly, as I remember) where they came regularly and where we counseled as to plans for conducting the Sunday School. We adopted a method of grading the lessons in the classes and using outlines, something I had not seen done so systematically in Sunday Schools up to that time. These outlines probably came from the Deseret Union, but we adapted them to our use, so I have always remembered our plan as partly original and quite successful. I have always cherished the year that I

served with these men and the other officers and teachers and members of this Sunday School," he concluded, "as one of the happy experiences of my life."

On Sunday afternoon, September 29, 1901, the Oneida Stake Academy building was used for a special Sunday School convention. Superintendent Porter and other leaders and teachers decided that the Old Testament would be the course of study in all the Sunday School grades for the coming year. The teachers were to make use of the Standard Works as supplementary texts as well as "any scientific or historical work of good repute as shall be deemed serviceable as general reference by the teachers in the various departments."

At the Sunday night meeting on September 29, the Preston Ward Mutual Improvement Association was reorganized. Porter was sustained as president with Nephi Larson and P. J. Hansen, counselors. He would function as both MIA president and Sunday School superintendent until leaving Preston in August 1902.

While in Preston, Porter began his career as a newspaperman. His previous experience had been as a printer's devil at the *Daily Nation* in Logan in his youth. Porter purchased a one-third interest in the *Preston Standard*. A note for \$300 was signed to finance the operation. His "partners were Edwin Cutler and a transient printer who later vanished." Porter then induced Harry Halton, "a printer from Logan, to be a one-third partner and operate the printing office at \$50 a month." Porter "wrote the local news and helped with the job work, also sold ads and was business manager." To sell subscriptions, he rode a horse all around the area to call on people. The men published the paper for about one year, then "sold out and divided our profits — about \$400 — and all left Preston."

Just before the Porters made the move from Preston to Rexburg, they were feted at a "delightful farewell party" arranged by Bishop Rogers and the Sunday School officers and teachers. "It was then I realized how many friends we had in that city," wrote Porter. Porter left friends but kept in touch over the years he lived in Rexburg.



Arthur Porter - Louise Marie Koebbel Porter. Father and Mother of Arthur Porter, Jr.

2

Family Man

The Porters arrived in Rexburg in September 1902. The town had been founded in 1883 by Thomas E. Ricks and named in his honor — Rex being the German ancestral name of the Ricks family. Village status was acquired in 1893 after some anti-Mormon political upheaval. By 1902, the anti-Mormon campaign had clearly become unfashionable as a political weapon. The town had settled into a progressive era. The railroad brought settlers and visitors right into town. Two LDS wards were operating as part of Fremont Stake.

Porter recalled:

The public school was housed in a two-story frame building located at the site of the present Madison High School building [refers to the old location on Main Street and First West]. James A. Langton was principal. The courses consisted of grades first to eighth. Very few attended the seventh and eighth grades as they mostly attended the same grades at the Ricks Academy.

There was no paving or curb and gutter, neither on the sidewalks nor the streets. The streets were flat; some had been graveled, somewhat, but the gravel would settle. There were occasional swales across the area which in spring or rainy seasons were mud holes. Going west on First North from Second East, I occasionally found it necessary to get across mud holes by crossing on the wire fence. Mud holes would develop on Main Street

although at this time considerable gravel had been hauled in. Second East would develop in rainy weather into a quagmire from twelve to twenty inches deep with occasional holes deeper.

There were irrigation ditches each side of Main Street. Wooden sidewalks constructed of 2 x 4 timber had been laid on Main Street and an occasional block or two on other streets.

Flamm's store, a rock building, was the principal mercantile institution [Main Street and First East]. Durans and Winter operated a store a block west of them on Main Street — not for long. Sharp, Patterson, et al., had built a store just west of the latter. The Cooperative Wagon and Machine Company was established on the corner opposite north of the Flamm Company [Main and First East]. The Rexburg Drug [was] on the corner west of Flamm's and Johnny Vorse's City Drug a block west. Thomas' men's clothing store, several saloons operated by Layman, David Charles, Dewitt, James Eckersell, etc., were other retail outlets on Main Street.

A lumber company [was] operated by Eli McEntire; the *Journal*, operated by James H. Wallis, and the *Snake River Current*, [operated] by John Harry and Jacob Wahlin combined about this time as the *Current-Journal* [operated] by Wallis.

Other business enterprises were: McAlister's Harness Shop, Jacob Brenner's Blacksmith Shop, John Squires Book Store and Barber Shop, Heber Lenroot's Harness Shop, Nash Brothers Blacksmith Shop, J. R. Young's Furniture Store, and Mrs. Emmaline James' Millinery Store.

Residences of outstanding interest were stone buildings of J. W. Webster, Jacob Brenner, Thomas E. Ricks, Jr., John T. Smellie, T. J. Winter, and the D. O. Osborne house. Flamm's Opera House was the principal playhouse in this part of the valley, also popular as a dance hall, and [it] was used by the LDS Church for quarterly conferences. Woodvine's Hall, one and one-half blocks west on Main Street, was also popular as a dance hall and as a place of public gatherings.

The Porters settled into the community. They built a home on property purchased from Ezra Dalby on Second North Street between Center Street and First East into which their little family moved. Their daughter Jessie had been born in Preston September 29, 1901. Her sister Virginia was born in Rexburg June 28, 1904. By the late summer of 1905, Gertrude could announce for sure that another baby would be born into the family. That baby, to be named Gertrude for her mother, was born March 28, 1906. The mother did not recover from the effects of childbirth. She died on Tuesday, April 10, 1906, leaving a bereaved husband and "two little girls, Jessie and Virginia, and an

infant girl two weeks old who remain a testimony that she gave her life that she might fulfill the first and greatest commandment of God: 'Multiply and replenish the earth.'" Gertrude would have been twenty-eight years old on September 19. Porter's sister Flo came from Logan to help take care of the children until other arrangements could be made.

Gertrude's funeral was held Wednesday, April 11, 1906, commencing at 3:00 p.m. in the first ward. The academy choir opened the services with the song: "Slumber;" Charles O. Engar offered the invocation. The choir then sang "Down by the River." William A. Walker and John H. Squires spoke. Oliver Christiansen joined the choir and sang the solo part in "Oh Death Where Is Thy Victory." Remarks by Ezra Christiansen, expressions of condolence from academy students and faculty, the choir singing "Nearer My God to Thee," and the benediction by Oscar A. Kirkham concluded the services.

The *Current-Journal* issue of April 12 conveyed the sense of the community:

Since moving here, Sister Porter has not taken an active part in public work but has considered her home the sphere of her greatest good. She has placed on the lives of her babes the imprint of her sweet loving disposition and love for divine. She was a faithful, loving, and tender helpmate, willing to do anything to please her good husband. She spoke ill of no one and had charity for all. She was better to others than to herself. All who knew her knew her but to love her; not an enemy did she have. But she was not to stay with us. God needs such spirits as was hers, and she has been summoned where she forms the connecting link between hearts on earth and spirits in heaven. We would say words of consolation to the dear ones left behind, but they know our thoughts. God is just is all we say.

Gently to one of gentle mold like thee,
As light winds, wandering through groves of bloom
Detach the delicate blossoms from the tree,
Close thy sweet eyes calmly and without pain,
And we will trust in God to see you yet again.

Interment was in the Logan Cemetery. Members of the Porter and Paull families were there to dedicate and hallow the spot.

Jessie remembers very little about her mother. She was not quite five years old when her mother died. She does recall that her mother "had beautiful long, dark hair," and Jessie would watch her brush it. Gertrude's sisters took the baby to care for her. The two older girls, Jessie and Virginia, were cared for by their father's sister Flo who came from Logan to stay with them. Jessie recalled that "until my sister Gertrude was five or six years old, I had hardly seen her."

When the school term began at the academy on October 8, 1906, there was one new member of the faculty that would have a profound influence on Porter. Miss Nelle Child of Lima, Montana, was hired to "teach vocal and instrumental music."

Nelle Child was born January 2, 1886, in Ogden, Utah. She grew up on the family ranch near Lima, Montana. Early in her youth she demonstrated musical talent. Her parents determined that she would have opportunities to increase her talent. She studied vocal music and piano "under Squire Coop of Ogden and Salt Lake City" and studied piano as a "student of Edward Bagster Perry of Chicago." The culmination of her studies was at Dallas, Texas, at the Landon Conservatory of Music. She had gone to Lima for the summer to stay with her parents before assuming her position at Ricks Academy.

On Thursday, October 10, Nelle displayed her talent. She "gave a charming song recital, her program running the gamut of the classic to the modern composers. She has a mezzo soprano voice, rich, full, and sweet, and sang with taste and feeling," rhapsodized a reporter for the *Current-Journal* (quite probably Porter). "In response to generous applause, she sang a dainty song of her own composition that proved so pleasing she was compelled to repeat it." Nelle had the attention of the academy faculty and the community. The academy gave her special treatment. "Room two on the first floor has been tastefully furnished as her private studio."

By mid-November the *Current-Journal* could announce that "Miss Child is meeting with flattering success in her special work in voice training and pianoforte. She already has a class of nearly fifty private pupils and much favorable comment is heard as to her ability as a teacher and interpreter of music." Over the next eighteen months the *Current-Journal* carried an amazing amount of material on Nelle Child.

The places and songs she sang, the piano concerts she performed, the operettas in which she participated, the social teas and ladies' groups she entertained, were carefully interpreted for the public by some news reporter who obviously understood music and had a discerning eye. Even when Nelle was out of town for whatever reason, her absence was noted by the reporter. Nelle also took little Jessie Porter to Lima, Montana, where Jessie lived with the Child family and attended first grade there.

The courtship of Nelle and Arthur probably commenced in mid 1907. At least by the beginning of 1908 the courtship was common knowledge. They were married in the Salt Lake City Temple on June 24, 1908. Public announcement of the wedding was made a few days later.

On August 13, 1908, the Porters joined Nelle's sister and her husband, Gladys and Frank Dice, for a trip to Yellowstone Park. They rode the Oregon Short Line Railroad to West Yellowstone, then toured the park for several days before returning home August 19.

On Sunday evening, February 21, 1909, the Porters took the train to Ogden. While there they attended the Child family reunion. That provided an opportunity for Nelle to introduce her husband and children to those of the Child family who had not yet met them. She wanted her relatives to know that she loved her husband's children as if they were her own. Indeed, she raised them as her very own. They enjoyed the reunion with its business meetings, luncheon, program, trading of genealogy, and dance.

On September 8, 1909, the Porters welcomed their first child and fourth daughter, Louise Child Porter. The couple would add seven more children to the family, each one being given the matronymic "Child" for their middle name: John, May 28, 1912; Austin, August 14, 1914 (died, August 19, 1914); Arthur, June 4, 1916; Warren, March 15, 1920; Mary Nell, March 6, 1924; Ann Broy, October 14, 1926; Margaret, June 30, 1929. (About two years after the birth of daughter Louise, young Gertrude, who had been living with her mother's sisters in Logan since the death of her own mother, returned to Rexburg to live with the rest of the family.)

On November 13, 1909, Mr. and Mrs. L. "Brush" Underwood of Dillon, Montana, visited the Porters to see the new baby. "Brush" pronounced the baby "nearly as good looking as theirs."

On April 22, 1911, Arthur Porter, Sr., of Ora, Idaho, (Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Porter, Sr., and family had moved from Logan to Idaho in 1906 and had homesteaded a farm in Sarilda, Idaho) was hurt in an accident on the farm. "In unhitching a team, one tug was forgotten. The frightened animal pulled the buggy, a heavy white top, around the yard. Mr. Porter was knocked down and both wheels passed over his back. At first it was feared he was fatally hurt inside. He rallied from the shock, however, and is getting along nicely. His wrist is strained and his back badly bruised and strained, causing much pain in moving. He is seventy years of age." A few days later Porter received word that his father had developed an infection and was critically ill. Porter traveled to Ora to find his father recovering.

The Child family from Lima visited often in the Porter home as they traveled to and from Utah to visit family members. In late 1916, Nelle's parents left for Hawaii to spend the winter with their oldest son.

On Sunday, November 24, 1917, Nelle's father, A. W. Child, was visiting members of his family in Pocatello when he suddenly became ill and died just a few hours later. The Porters left Rexburg that evening and traveled to Pocatello, then on to Ogden where the funeral took place on Wednesday.

Nelle often shared her musical talent with the community. She sang and played the piano at a variety of social club meetings. She was in demand at academy functions. In addition, she taught private lessons to a large number of students.

On June 24 and 25, 1918, the Porter family joined several friends for a little diversion from the stringencies imposed by World War I. They camped out near Mesa Falls on the Snake River and visited and relaxed.

Louise recalls a time in 1915 when she was six years old and she and John were suffering from whooping cough and the family was quarantined for most of the winter. A Crokinole tournament was organized by Porter to keep the children entertained during the long

winter. Jessie, Virginia and Gertrude, who were the oldest, were on one team and Louise, John (aged three), and their father were on the opposing team. "Every night we would play and we kept track of which side won. Papa said that if he won or his team won, the three girls would have to wash his feet." He claimed that he was keeping his feet out of the tub when he took a bath. The two youngest believed him and were terrified of the consequences. A sack of candy was the prize for the winning team. "The night of the big playoff I kept thinking about his dirty feet," Louise recalls. Luckily, the three older girls won the match and they all got in on the candy prize.

The "Great War" was over, the post-war influenza epidemic had run its course, and the economic hard times of the 1920s were yet to be fully felt when an announcement was made that the famous politician William Jennings Bryan would be in town. He was to speak at a meeting in the tabernacle on July 19, 1920. Porter and some of his family went to hear the "Great Commoner." He was not favorably impressed.

On April 7, 1924, Porter participated in the organizational meeting of the "Porter Surname Association." The "Constitution and By-Laws" specified that "the object of this association shall be to perpetuate the memory and genealogy of our forefathers; to cement the ties of fellowship and kinship between living members by frequent association and friendly intercourse, preservation of history and memorials, and, through unity of effort, to prevent duplication of temple labor through blind or careless individual work." Officers were elected and their duties explained. Meetings were to be held semi-annually "at or near Salt Lake City on the first or second day of the General Church Conference in April and October." Porter was elected president and would serve well for a considerable time.

On Friday, June 12, 1925, Arthur Porter, Sr., died at eighty-four years of age. Funeral services were held in the Rexburg Second Ward on Sunday, June 14, commencing at 4:00 p.m. Bishop William Ovard conducted. Arthur Porter, Sr., was eulogized as one who "had lived a true Latter-day Saint life." He had an "exceptional memory" and a great "capacity to quote the scriptures." All six sons and six daughters were at the funeral. They provided comfort for each other and their

mother. The six sons were pallbearers. An observer for the *Rexburg Journal* noted that "for several years past, Father Porter has done light work at the *Journal* office, looking after details in a faithful and systematic manner. He always kept the stock room and other parts he had charge of in first class order. To us who were accustomed to rely on his unfailing attention to his part and to be encouraged by his cheery disposition, his absence will be keenly felt."

Porter, as eldest son, took care of his mother's affairs. On January 8, 1928, he attended a meeting of the county commission to seek cancellation of property tax on a lot owned by his mother. The tax was cancelled because "she is a widow."

Porter was intensely proud of the accomplishments of his children. An excerpt from his diary dated April 20, 1928, noted that he "received a card yesterday from Virginia giving me greetings on my birthday. She is on a mission in California. She has been out over a year." He wrote that "Gertrude finished teaching today at Plano and is home again. She had the lower grades and has been very successful, the trustees wanting her to return. The state examiner had visited her school during the season and commended her work highly as does also the county superintendent, Miss Annetta Goodliffe." Additionally, he explained that "at an election of the students at the Madison High School today for city officials to serve on May 3 (of Boys Week April 29 to May 5), John was elected mayor. His rival for the office was Lavon Sorensen. Most of the latter ticket won. John's party was called the 'Bang' and Lavon's the 'Whig.'" Porter reported about a month later that "my daughter Jessie and her husband Marriner D. Morrell completed their teaching at Archer this week and moved their effects to our place until they get relocated."

On May 10, 1929, Virginia returned from her twenty-seven month mission to California. She was home in time to participate in the family reunion of the Arthur Porter, Sr., family.

All three sons also served missions, with John serving in Canada, Arthur in Great Britain, and Warren in Brazil. Daughter Louise also served a mission with her husband in Australia and daughter Mary Nell served missions in Austria and Jacksonville, Florida, with her husband.

From the marriage of Jessie on August 3, 1927, until Margaret's marriage on January 23, 1948, the Porters had someone getting married on an average of every two years, although there was a nine-year hiatus from John's marriage on November 10, 1933, until Arthur's on April 27, 1942. But from 1927 to 1933 and from 1942 to 1948, the Porters must have hardly had time to recover from one wedding before beginning plans for the next one.

In the summer of 1939, Warren, Mary Nell, Ann, and Margaret accompanied their parents to the San Francisco World's Fair. They traveled a loop through Montana, North Idaho, Spokane, to the Washington coast, down the coast to San Francisco. On the way they visited with daughter Louise Clarke who was living in Darby, Montana. They returned by way of Los Angeles, Hoover Dam, Nevada, and Utah. The fair and trip were memorable. Part of the time in San Francisco was spent buying goods for the store at the large wholesale "Market" which was at a large hotel in San Francisco.

The family took many trips to similar "Market Weeks" in Salt Lake at the Newhouse Hotel. This was a fun time for the three younger girls as buying for the Christmas sales took place in the summer at wholesale houses in Salt Lake, and they were able to play with the toys on display. Porter's Book Store had become a large store with many departments in addition to books and office supplies and Porter had become very adept at buying for the large inventory. The semi-annual trips to Salt Lake for conference were always combined with a buying trip for the store.

On April 8, 1943, John recorded in his "Among Us Neighbors" column in the *Rexburg Journal* that

old age must be creeping on because today I am looking back upon former youthful happy days. The reminiscing is caused as I watch the tearing down of the "old barn." Two weeks ago a small ad in the *Journal* announced the barn was for sale. Anxious buyers swarmed the office and the barn was sold. During the past week, workmen have been tearing down the barn and will soon be moving it. Its going marks the passing of an era that was a happy one.

Many of the most happy hours spent by the boys in our block were in the barn. It was there that I first rolled a cigarette of newspaper and hay leaves and tried out my hand at smoking. Many a time when playing cops

and robbers, the barn was the rendezvous for the robbers, and when the cops had them holed up in the barn, a good rock fight was usually started. I remember one such fight when Harold Anderson was hit in the eye with a large rock that almost put his eye out. He still carries the scar.

My first plunge into the world of high finance was in an enterprise connected with the barn. I remember well reading a small book on rabbits entitled, "Making Money as They Multiply." Together with the boys of the neighborhood I built rabbit pens in the barn and then caught some rabbits that were running wild under the old barn on the Nathan Ricks place. Believe it or not, our enterprise was a failure because the rabbits refused to multiply.

The barn gave Dad the idea that a cow would be a good thing for us to have. He bought a large brute of a Holstein. Art and I devised a system of each milking two teats — he on one side and I on the other. It was a good idea but the cow didn't give much milk. She finally was sold to the butcher. [Family members said the cow was sold to "protect her."] She never seemed to get used to being milked just once a day and that at noon.

Well, those are just a few of the thoughts that go through my mind as I sit across the street from the barn and view its destruction. It has been useful in a way, and I hope that wherever it is moved that it will receive proper respect. My own boys started to play in the barn last summer, but as yet they are hardly old enough to have had any of the experiences that were mine as a youth. They shall have to search for other quarters.

The barn will undoubtedly be moved to a farm where it can be put to a more practical purpose. It will then be playing an important role in the "Food for Freedom" program. The spot where the barn rested will be used as a "Victory Garden." It should produce abundantly as the soil is rich. Thus we see the march of civilization: continued improvement, casting aside the old when usefulness is gone and replacing with something new and productive. May it ever be so.

The barn was a play house for all the Porter children as well as the neighborhood children. "I never wanted to go to anyone else's house to play," recalled Mary Nell, "because nobody else had a place like ours." Mary Nell, Ann, and Margaret played dolls in the barn and put on their own plays. Besides the barn, there was always a large swing and sandbox and teeter totter. The large orchard, besides providing, apples, plums, and raspberries, was a place to hide in the plum thicket, wade in the irrigation ditch, and run through the tall grass. For a time, a large tennis court was also part of the huge lot but this was planted into lawn in later years and became a place for croquet or softball games.

Because of the large area around the family home, watering day became an important day in the week with many hours spent in setting the water to various parts of the orchard and gardens. When it came time to flood the front lawns, the children were allowed to invite all their friends to don their bathing suits and run through the several inches of water on the lawns.

In March 1952 the Porters, with their children all married and away from home, took a vacation. On March 19 they headed for Salt Lake City to stay the night with Mary Nell and her family. On March 20, despite a snow storm which had dumped three or four inches on the city during the night, they headed south. They soon ran out of snow and spent a comfortable night in St. George. The next morning they continued on toward California. They "stopped awhile at Las Vegas and looked in one of the large gambling houses. All such places are crowded day and night. Thousands of people spend money and energy trying to get something for nothing. It is an amazing spectacle to contemplate." They reached Pasadena on March 22 early in the afternoon. They intended to leave the car there and catch a train to San Francisco but were unable to get seats. They decided to drive up the coast. They got directions from some friends they called, but got lost. "We were directed to drive out on Sunset Boulevard," wrote Porter. "Thus we drove through Beverly Hills for hours, wondering when we would reach the coast and go north. We finally took a cabin at Malibu (\$5) right on the shore of the ocean. We were quite comfortable although it was quite windy." They got to Millbrae, not far from San Francisco, on the twenty-fourth and stayed with Sally and Frank Dice (Nelle's nephew and his wife) for a couple of days. On the morning of March 26, they boarded a ship for Hawaii.

"Matson's greeter puts a lei on us, tickets are validated and a porter carries our luggage aboard and helps find our stateroom," Porter noted in his journal of the trip. "Lots of friends of passengers came aboard and all do a lot of drinking. Sally and Frank come on [board] with us but we are pretty tame. A little before four o'clock the whistle sounds for visitors to leave, after which the gangplanks are lifted. A great crowd is gathered on the pier to wave goodbye. Serpentine is furnished the passengers and a great amount is thrown to friends

ashore. Then a tug, the *Sea Horse*, pushes the *Lurline* out into open water. The engine starts the propellers and we are underway. Soon we pass through Golden Gate, pass Alcatraz, and are out to sea, out of sight of land. Going out to sea is an experience that is different to any farewell on land," observed Porter. "It is an adventure fraught with uncertainty and, in former times, great danger and seems to develop a closer tie between human beings. There is also the expectation of seasickness, particularly in stormy, rough weather. Seasickness, I believe, is greatly exaggerated as only a small percentage of people are affected. In my own experience I have never been sick unless shut in the cabin in great storms." The Porters enjoyed the cruise and had interesting experiences:

There were Keeno games, Canasta, and horse races. I tried the latter and won three times out of five. Felt a little guilty, especially when I won. There were some good games one afternoon, especially the one rejuvenating a number of males with receding hairlines. Women participated in nail driving contests, picking up potatoes on spoons, etc. These contests created lots of laughter. There was a meeting of service club members of which there were about six Rotarians, five Lions, three Soroptimists (women) and one less well known. Each made a few comments. I mentioned the fact that I had called at Honolulu as an emigrant from New Zealand in 1885 when I was nine years old. One of the ladies, Mrs. Ruth Wheelwright of Ogden, asked to speak to me after the session. She told me she came from New Zealand when a girl. She surmised we were LDS converts as she was also. She was the mother of four sons and two daughters. Three sons had filled missions, two in New Zealand. Her maiden name was Pierce. I saw her several times later, but she did not seem interested in continuing the acquaintance. She evidently was quite well-to-do as she had a private state room on A deck with private shower and toilet whereas we were on D deck with public shower and toilets. At the grandmother party, Mrs. Wheelwright was awarded the prize for the largest number of grandchildren, sixteen. Nelle and I were in the show at the time or she should have had the award, twenty-two grandchildren and nary a gray hair. Mrs. Wheelwright was quite gray although very good looking.

We did not make many acquaintances. It was rather chilly so we seldom went on deck. We did, however, make the acquaintance of a Mrs. Sonia Brown and her two boys from Seattle. She was a very attractive blond. Her husband had died suddenly last summer. They occupied the table next to us in the Coral dining room. We also met a Mrs. Silva and one or two other ladies in this dining room.

A rather noisy group, four couples and a Navy man, sat at a table near us. There was a Doctor Cline and wife, a woman who did most of the talking and her husband, a large Italian who did most of the listening, and a rather small man whom they called Leo who did most of the laughing. They were a jovial group. An elderly lady at another table, Mrs. Silva, produced some comedy by talking and singing. We heard she had formerly been an entertainer. She kissed the steward one day as part of her antics. We gave our dining room steward and room steward each \$10 for their good service and friendliness. Other entertainment on the ship was contests in tennis, ping pong, trap shooting. These were all on the deck where it was chilly to stand or sit. We arrived at pier ten in Honolulu Monday morning, March 31, at 9:00 a.m. A great crowd was there to meet the ship. We were met by Helen and Francis and John and Peggy. They placed several leis of different kinds on us, loaded us and baggage in their station wagon, and Helen drove us to their home at 2535 Pacific Heights Road.

The Porters spent twelve days seeing the sights of Oahu with Mrs. Porter's brother Francis and his wife. They were able to attend a session in the Hawaiian Temple at Laie. While in Laie they were treated to a real Hawaiian Hukilau with all the ceremony of that native festival. "An interesting feature of the Hukilau," wrote Porter, "was the Hawaiian children selling coco hats they had made, fifty cents each. There was also an excellent program depicting native activities. Everybody was exceptionally hospitable."

On April 12 they "took the plane, Hawaiian Airlines, for Kona landing at Kailua" where they stayed at the home of Nelle's brother Lin and his wife. (This was Arthur's first airplane ride which he had avoided up to this time. He was forced to make it by circumstances as there was no other way to travel to the "Big Island.") On Sunday morning, April 13, Porter attended the local LDS branch. "There were two missionaries guiding the service," he wrote. "First there was Sunday School. A visiting brother and I spoke briefly. Then they dismissed Sunday School for Sacrament Meeting where they put on an Easter program. It was not very well done as they had not learned their parts and read poorly. There were about forty to fifty present. There are ninety-five in the branch. At the close they passed out colored eggs. I received two. Like all Hawaiians, they are very hospitable and happy. They also sang well." Porter's journal ends with the trip to Kona. Their

trip to Hawaii was soon over and they returned home with fond memories.

When Porter could combine politics and family, he was especially animated. The city election was approaching in April 1955 and no one had filed for the councilman position in the first precinct. John had announced that Marriner D. Morrell would be a write-in candidate. On Saturday, April 23, John called his father to "say he was leaving early Sunday for Boise to attend the Rotary District Convention and asked me," noted Porter, "to organize a campaign as he would not be back until Tuesday. He had meanwhile done nothing about it. I was on the spot. As I have been active in every campaign for more than forty years, much is expected of me." There were two other prospective candidates for the place — Claude Burtenshaw and Victor Chandler — each with supporters. Porter, in a bit of an understatement noted that "I did some planning Sunday and got Burtenshaw to relinquish his ambitions." On Monday Porter "canvassed a little to explore the field and got Burtenshaw's backers with Marriner." Tuesday, April 26, was election day and Porter "was up early calling on leading men and women to help in their areas and giving them the argument or propaganda why it was necessary to get Marriner into this office and hinting as to danger of an undesirable person being written in by a designing group — any imaginable group! I neglected the second ward for lack of time believing very few would remember the election or would not bother to vote as they had no contest. I was right in this as only thirty-nine votes were cast there."

Porter was active all day. He "called on as many people as I could in wards one and three and hauled some to the polls — a big day's work for a one-man campaign committee. The results were gratifying. Marriner won handily in each ward. Out of a total vote in the city of 242, he received 147 votes against a total of 50 cast for all other 'write in' candidates, six in all, for the place," Porter gleefully concluded.

In 1965, his daughter Virginia Porter Howell was seriously ill after a lengthy illness. Porter made many trips to Ogden to visit with Virginia. On one of these occasions, when he was about eighty-nine, he rode the bus to Ogden to visit with Virginia who was in the hospital. Afterwards, he went to Salt Lake City where he stayed in a

downtown hotel and spent several days working at the Genealogy Library. Virginia died June 8, 1965. (His daughter Gertrude Gifford died ten years later, June 12, 1975.)

Porter's children have fond memories of him and a happy home. In recalling his appearance, Jessie said he "had a prominent nose, and he used to laugh and say it reminded him of a beak. His brown eyes were very alert and bright, and he was a very personable person to look at." He was slender, about five feet ten inches tall, and walked with a slight stoop in his older years. He attributed his stature to the hard times he experienced as a child and not always having enough to eat. Other than wearing a mustache for a brief period while on his mission, he was always clean shaven. He had been raised in the English Victorian tradition and retained several of those characteristics. He dressed well, even to do mundane chores. Warren remembers that his father was the only man he knew who climbed Tablerock with the Boy Scouts in a business suit. On father's and son's outings he dressed formally. He would doff his coat to chop wood but still had on his white shirt and suit trousers. In later years he usually wore a sweater and muffler, no matter what time of the year or temperature.

He was very careful in his eating habits and never overate, but always took small portions of whatever was served. He was often scolded by Nelle for taking a fourth of a slice of bread and leaving the rest which she usually finished for him. He also was in the habit of taking a short nap after dinner which was always served at noon. This seemed to refresh him and he would return to the office. He often returned to the office in the evening after supper to take care of paper work.

Another Victorian characteristic was that children "should be seen, but not heard." Especially was this principle enforced when church authorities such as President Heber J. Grant were at the house. Porter was not too demonstrative with his children but expected obedience. He rarely raised his voice. A quiet "Mind!" ended argument or quarreling. He spoke softly and slowly to everyone. He became accustomed to his quicker-speaking wife ending sentences for him. "He was deliberate in speech," commented John, "and thought of what he was going to say before he said it."

Another characteristic Porter exhibited was that whatever you do, whether business, politics, religion, etc., you do with energy and commitment. He firmly believed everyone should have a trade and started each child working in his businesses at a small hourly salary as soon as they were big enough to "see above the counter." (The latter comment was made by his mother-in-law, Mary Louise Child, who lived next door to the Porters for many years.) There was to be no playing until a job was done and no cutting corners to hasten completion of a job. But he made work pleasant by visiting with his children and often singing the "good old songs" while they worked.

Home, for a Victorian, was a place to rest, get sustenance, and be renewed by a supportive family, not a place to fritter away your time. Porter, it seemed while at home, was either remodeling the place or outside planting a garden or trees or chopping wood. He did play games occasionally with the children but, characteristically, he played to win. His droll sense of humor made him pleasant to be around. "His sense of humor was evident throughout his life and he taught us all to enjoy a joke, even if the joke was on us," Margaret noted in a talk on "The Influence of a Wonderful Father in My Life." "I think," she concluded, "it was his ability to laugh at himself and his mistakes that impressed me the most."

Mealtime at the Porter home was always a pleasant time of the day as the family all gathered together promptly at noon and in the evening again. Besides the good food that Nelle served to the large family, it was a time for talking over the events of the day — politics, funny experiences, business, school. "There was always a lot of fun and laughter," Mary Nell noted "and I always looked forward to these times that we were all together and the stimulating conversation around the table." Sunday dinner was always eaten in the large dining room with Porter presiding at the head of the table. He had a habit of clearing his throat when he wanted something, such as another glass of water, and someone would immediately jump up to run and serve him.

The children remember the family automobile, a large Nash with extra jump seats between the front and back seats. They worried about the way their father drove. He liked to drive in the middle of the road

so he had plenty of leeway on each side, just in case. He enjoyed going for a Sunday afternoon drive in the country with whomever of the family wanted to go. Sometimes he would pick up one of his "little girls" (Mary Nell, Ann, and Margaret) and just drive around the block.

Porter enjoyed two special diversions — going to the movies with his family and dancing. Monday was the usual day to go to the movies. He traded theater advertising for tickets. There were not many movies that came to town that he and at least some of the children did not see.

Porter attended every dance he possibly could even though Nelle did not always accompany him. When he stopped in at the Playmore (the Playmore was located on the second floor above the J. C. Penney building on Main Street) or some other dance hall, if his sons were there with dates, he insisted on dancing with the dates, and he was an excellent dancer. His daughters never had to worry about being wall-flowers, recalled Ann, because he always danced with them. While Louise's boyfriend was on a mission, her dad would take her to the dances. "He would always dance two or three times," she said, "and then go back to work and then come back and get me and dance a few times, and then we would go home."

One evening when Ann and a girlfriend were on the way home from the movie, they could hear a fiddle being played for an "old time dance" at the Playmore. They decided to "go up and have a few good laughs watching these old timers dance." As they got to the dance floor, the first one they saw, Ann said, was "my dad up there dancing. He saw us and came over and danced with us. We square danced and just had a good time." He often attended the children's Christmas dance in the basement of the tabernacle. There he would teach his daughters how to dance.

When Ricks College had portraits made of all the former school presidents to hang in the Manwaring Center, they assigned Ralph McBride, a professor, to write a brief history of each president, stating his strong points or accomplishments during his tenure. Professor McBride decided to interview Porter about the men, as he had been at Ricks during each of their administrations. Professor McBride later told Warren that it was very amusing to him when Porter readily told the

virtues and contributions to Ricks of each of the presidents except one whose tenure had been rather short. He said that after some deliberation Porter recalled that "he was certainly a good dancer." And that seemed to be virtue enough.

Porter had a renaissance-type curiosity about almost everything. He was interested in what the children did at school, what kind of trees grew best in Rexburg's climate, the variety of topics at the annual Leadership Week, literature, music, art, politics, science, etc. He read widely and encouraged his children to read good books. He made sure they got a good book for a Christmas present. He expected his children to be good readers, good spellers, and use correct grammar in writing and speaking. They looked upon him as the "smartest man in the world." The "little girls" grew up believing that the only reason he could not be President of the United States was because he had been born in a foreign country. Whatever any member of his family wished to discuss, he had a grasp on the subject.

The children arranged a Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration for their parents. An open house was held on June 28, 1958. Many from the community stopped by to extend best wishes to the couple.

Each of Porter's children have their own anecdotes to help explain him.

Jessie:

When Jessie Claire was born and I was in the hospital, Papa said to Mama, "I'm surely glad that's Jessie up in the hospital and not you. I could never stand it to go through that again." Nine months later, almost to the day, Margaret was born. So he stood it. He was so sorry for Marriner that our first child was a girl because he was so disappointed that he had four girls before he had a boy and thought that now Marriner was starting out, and we were going to do the same thing. So he went over and consoled Marriner and said, "Never mind, maybe the next one will be a boy." The next three were; that was all we had.

Louise:

A poem Dad read to us all the time was "John Gilpin's Ride." I'll never forget that. Every now and then he would get this book out and say, "It is time that we hear about John Gilpin's ride again." I cannot remember the poem at all except this man, John Gilpin, was on a horse when he rode. The only time I remember he ever had to baby-sit the three little girls, he

started to read them the "Three Little Pigs" in French. Mother and I left him home with these three little girls and they could not understand the story.

John:

Right after Pearl Harbor, when they were moving the Japanese people from the coast, Dad was quite concerned about some of them moving in here. A fellow sold his place to a Japanese family. My Dad was concerned about it. He thought that there goes the neighborhood. He came over to my home and wondered what we could do. He said, they are moving them all in here. They are going to take over. After he got to know a lot of these people, he completely turned around. The Japanese-American people later honored him because of the help he gave to them in organizing citizenship classes when he was county superintendent of schools.

Arthur:

My mother used to tell this story and I am sure it is true. She and my father went to Salt Lake to conference one year. I suppose it was in his later years. They were walking down the street outside the temple block and they ran into some people who spoke to them. This one woman in particular came up and visited. My father went through all the niceties, visiting, and said a lot of things. As they walked on, he said to my mother, "I know that person but I cannot remember who she is." My mother said, "It's your sister Flo." He hadn't even recognized her.

Warren:

I remember one time when I accompanied Dad to Salt Lake City at conference time. We two went alone and stayed at the old Newhouse Hotel. I had made arrangements to meet one of my friends who was also there with his father. We met two girls from Rexburg, both older than we were, and made a date to go dancing that evening at the Coconut Grove Dance Pavillion. Right after we arrived and had only made it halfway around the huge dance floor, who should I bump in to but Dad. He was there dancing with Aunt Floss. Of course he asked me for, and got, a dance with my date. The girls never seemed to mind when they danced with him and all said — including my now wife, Viola — that he was a better dancer than I.

Mary Nell:

I remember the time when Dad was mayor and tried to set a good example for the community. He sent the dog catcher to pick up our dog Jiggs who was like part of the family. Any time there was any complaint about a dog running loose, somebody would call us up and say Jiggs had been doing something, so I guess it got to be an embarrassment for Dad.

We went next door and told my Grandmother Child that Dad had sent the dog catcher to get Jiggs. She went out and got Jiggs and took him in her house to save him and later scolded Dad for his actions. Jiggs lived to an old age.

Ann:

Dad was leading a choir at the first ward and Mother would have to help him every week. She would go through all the music with him and help him on the hymns. He told me one day, "Now I would hate to have your mother hear me say this, but you children all really get your musical ability from me. You know your mother is good, but her family — some of them cannot even carry a tune. She always thought you got your ability from her, but you didn't."

Margaret:

Daddy was the type to have plenty of help for Mother. Women will come up to me and say, "I used to work for your mother." They used to do housework. Daddy could not do anything in the house though. He didn't even know where the kitchen was. The only time he went there was to get a spoonful of sugar or jam or to eat a meal. Mama was sick one time. Jessie phoned me and said that she and I better go over and see what we can do for Papa. (Jessie called him Papa and I always called him Daddy.) So we went over there and Daddy was in the kitchen cooking himself an egg. It was just a laugh, and then he poured the grease down the drain. He didn't know what he was doing.

3

Ricks Academy & Ricks College

In September 1902, Arthur Porter, Jr., commenced teaching at Ricks Academy. For that purpose he had moved from Preston and his teaching position at Oneida Stake Academy. Porter's tenure at Ricks Academy would see many changes, but the physical plant in 1902 must have been disheartening. The academy was housed in the old ZCMI building on East Main Street. The building was a two-story brick building with an addition on the east side. Because the building could not accommodate all the students, the first ward church was used for classrooms during the week. (The first ward church at that time was located south of Main Street on Second East.) The foundation for a building had been laid where the present campus is located although there was some criticism concerning the distance one needed to travel to get there from downtown.

The academy offered seventh and eighth grades as well as the first two years of high school. There was a public grade school in Rexburg at the time but no high school. Many students were "considerably older than students in corresponding grades today," explained Porter, "due to pioneer conditions." The academy name had been changed earlier in 1902 from Fremont Stake Academy.

When Porter was hired, he joined five other faculty members. Ezra Christiansen (name was changed to Dalby in 1907) was principal and taught theology, pedagogy, history, and science. Hannah Grover taught English, drawing, and needlework. Ellen Clark taught elocution, reading, orthography, and physical culture. Thomas Jones taught preparatory classes, physiology, and penmanship. Edgar O. T. Reid taught the business course. Porter's courses rounded out the curriculum. He was assigned to teach mathematics, geography, and vocal music. His music credentials seemed to be a good singing voice and some facility on the mandolin. Only Christiansen and Porter held college degrees. Teachers often had no more than an eighth grade education. Porter explained that "an eighth grade graduate could get a contract to teach. In some country districts, the matter of cost was a qualification of importance. A low salary might be offered, and you got the job if you exhibited a fair education although not a graduate from a high school or college. Nevertheless," he continued, "I do not wish to disparage the work of teachers. Their opportunities were limited by pioneer conditions and lack of facilities. The great men and women that arose out of these schools testify to the great value of the teaching done and the dedication of these teachers to the profession."

The academy had started in 1888 as Bannock Stake Academy. In 1898, Bannock Stake was divided and the school received a new name to reflect the new stake — Fremont Stake Academy. That lasted until January 25, 1902, when the Fremont, Bingham, and Teton Stakes were combined into one district for educational purposes. That necessitated another name change. There was some debate about a new name and the local board recommended the name "Smith Academy," honoring the Prophet Joseph Smith and the then current president of the Church, Joseph F. Smith. "Smith Academy" lasted until March 5, 1902, when, upon recommendation of the Church Board of Education, the name was changed to Ricks Academy honoring Thomas E. Ricks, founder of Rexburg. Ricks had died a few months earlier on September 28, 1901.

When Porter began teaching at the academy, the school was under the jurisdiction of the General Church Board of Education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a local board. The local board was composed of the presidencies of the three stakes in the

education district. Thomas E. Bassett, president of Fremont Stake (Rexburg Stake did not come into existence until June 23, 1935), was president of the board. About two hundred students attended the academy during the 1902-03 school year.

The students were able to leave the ZCMI and first ward buildings for the 1903-04 school year. The new building had been completed in time for classes to be held in the fourteen classrooms of the new three-story stone building. Also in the building were four office rooms, a library, an auditorium and laboratory rooms.

During the 1904-05 school year, Porter taught only mathematics classes. By this time the faculty had increased to eleven and was more specialized although eight of the eleven did not have college degrees. Porter seriously considered writing a mathematics textbook, but he never got that project underway.

For the 1905-06 school year, Porter was assigned to teach science. That meant he taught physics, chemistry, physiology, geology, and botany. He collected a number of various bugs to use for illustration in his classes. Some faculty committees were established to aid the students in their academic and social pursuits. Porter was assigned to the athletic and amusements committees along with Alfred Bond, Oscar A. Kirkham, and Retta Snow. Porter's name appeared in print in the student publication *Student Rays* for the first time in February 1906 in the joke section:

Amy (in physics class): The air has other properties besides the ones mentioned. Because when cooking you cannot use the recipes for low climates when up in the mountains as it does not require as much material — sugar for instance. The higher up the less material.

Instructor Porter: If you can prove that, Miss Amy, I shall have my kitchen moved upstairs immediately.

On April 10, 1906, Gertrude Elizabeth Porter died leaving her husband and three little girls. The students and faculty of Ricks Academy attended the funeral and extended resolutions and letters of condolence to the bereaved. The students and faculty also joined the cortege to the depot where the family boarded the train for the ride to Logan where Mrs. Porter was to be buried. Porter returned from Logan

on April 21. He resumed his teaching responsibilities at the academy on April 23.

During the 1906-07 school year, Porter again taught science classes. The year was interrupted with the Founder's Day program on November 12. Apostle John Henry Smith dedicated the new building (it had taken almost three years for all encumbrances against the building to be paid). A quartet composed of Porter, David Smith, Alta Watson, and a Miss Harris sang as part of the dedicatory ceremony.

Early in December 1907, several people representing the ward mutuals, the militia, and the academy met in Dr. George E. Hyde's office to discuss organization of a city athletic association to benefit young people. A committee was formed with Dr. Hyde, chairman; Porter, secretary; and Robert Tempest, treasurer. Another committee on membership was appointed by the chairman. Woodvine Hall was available four nights a week and equipment was purchased to set up a gymnasium there. A membership fee of seventy-five cents a month was charged to pay expenses. It was a grand scheme to entertain the young people, but the developers soon found that the young people were more interested in other forms of entertainment.

Porter is credited in the May 1907 *Student Rays* with having the following interchange with a student:

Instructor Porter in botany: Every green plant contains chlorophyll.

Fayette: Goodness! Then there must be lots of chlorophyll in this class.

Porter rested from the school year and began preparation for the next one by attending a summer school session at University of Utah in Salt Lake City to do some graduate study. He left in June and returned to Rexburg a few days before classes started in the fall.

Porter's teaching load was increased for the 1907-08 school year. For the first time, classes in languages appear in the catalog, and Porter, with his background in German, was assigned two classes along with his science classes. Additionally, Principal Dalby (by this time he had changed his last name) decided that students, faculty, and anyone interested from the community would be invited to attend a "Free Lecture Course" to be held each Wednesday night. Dalby had the whole year scheduled. Porter was assigned to lecture on the subject of

"Evolution" on December 11, 1907, and on "Travels in Europe" on March 17, 1908. His scientific background fit him for the first lecture and his missionary background fit him for the second.

In February 1908 the *Student Rays* carried a "Roast to the Faculty":

Arthur Porter, we like the name,
We know a lady who likes the same. [Nelle Child]
He teaches German with care and skill,
Puts us through the language mill.
Sober and serious all the time,
Whate'er he teaches is good, sublime.
We'll learn the lessons he presents,
And extend to him our compliments.

In March 1908 *Student Rays* under "General Locals" carried this interchange:

John: Brother Porter, what course does Effie Evans take?

Porter: She takes devotional and noon hour.

Instructor Porter: If a bear went in a dry goods store, what would it want?

Spencer: It would want muslin.

An annual chore of academy students and faculty was April clean-up day. In 1908, it was Porter's turn, along with Oscar Steele and Ezekial Holman, to see that assignments were made and the work done. After the work was finished, Porter attended city council meeting on May 4 and, "in behalf of the Ricks Academy, petitioned the council for a refund of \$5 for work done by them on the street east of the academy grounds last Friday, the work having been necessary for drainage of waste waters from the grounds. The matter was referred to the road and bridge committee to investigate and report at the next session." The council decided no payment was necessary.

In April, a writer for *Student Rays* observed that "Miss Nelle Child, instructor of music at the academy last year, was a visitor at the school recently." She may have visited the school generally, but there was no doubt whom she visited specifically. The courtship of Arthur and Nelle was by no means a well-kept secret. In fact, rather than attend summer

school in June and July, Arthur and Nelle were married June 24, 1908, in the Salt Lake Temple. Cards were sent to announce the wedding. The couple honeymooned for several days, returning to Rexburg on July 15.

Earlier, on June 15, Porter had been asked to speak at a funeral of one of his students, Mary Robb. He "spoke in highest praise of her character and vigorous scholarship pointing out that, though young, she had lived a long and successful life." Mary, from Wilford, Idaho, was twenty years old. She died suddenly and unexpectedly from blood poisoning "superinduced by appendicitis," according to an article in the *Current-Journal*.

During the 1908-09 school year, Porter was assigned to teach science and German again. The "Free Lecture Course" had not worked out well and was dropped for the year. The *Student Rays* for November, under the heading "Fizzers," poked a little fun at Porter's chemistry class:

Brother Porter: Students, please taste Experiment 32.

In the fall, 1908, Porter taught a zoology class. "Professor Porter's class in zoology is doing some extremely interesting work in the laboratory this week. The students bring to class live crayfish and frogs which are dissected and studied minutely."

The Christmas issue, 1908, of *Student Rays* again noted a dialogue from Porter's chemistry class:

Martha: Mr. Porter, is a liter of dark brown gas visible to the eye?

Brother Porter: Yes, unless you're asleep.

The January 1909 issue noted the following advice:

Brother Porter: Students, do not delay performing this experiment any longer as it will be necessary for you to become suffocated while doing it.

The March issue carried this sage advice:

Porter: You should have a pleasant smile for your visitors. That's the way my wife got me.

Observing Arbor Day in April 1909 provided the impetus for faculty and students of the academy to clean up the grounds. Porter had done such a good job directing the 1908 effort that he and H. H. Hale were assigned to direct the effort in 1909. "Arbor Day was celebrated at the Ricks Academy with enthusiasm and school loyalty. The students all came out in their working clothes and, provided with shovels and other implements, spent the day in working to improve the surroundings. They were encouraged and directed by their teachers and Principal Dalby who worked side by side with them all day," noted an observer for the *Current-Journal*. "A splendid embankment ten feet wide at the top was thrown up on the lower side of the ditch behind the building. This was graded as a promenade and sown with white clover and a row of Carolina poplars planted along the ditch side. In time this will form a beautiful background, shutting out whatever is behind it. It will also protect the grounds from floods and erosion."

The *Student Rays* was published as a "Commencement Number" in May 1909. Each faculty member received some attention. "Porter," the issue noted, "has charge of science and German. Quiet and unassuming, he is not one who wastes valuable energy in useless pursuits but wisely holds it in reserve until the opportune moment for expression arrives. His devotional talks are on current science or on foreign travel, dealing chiefly with Deutschland and Switzerland. It is reported that he is very considerate of students' feelings, taking revenge only during examination periods. He has been with us for seven years and will continue his work next year."

Although the academy catalog noted that Porter would be teaching science and German during the 1909-10 school year, he also taught Book of Mormon classes and a class entitled "Deportment" — these in addition to his usual chemistry, German I and II, physiology, geology, and botany classes. Porter notes in the margin of his grade book ("The Teachers Improved Class Book") the names of the students who used profanity, broke the Word of Wisdom, went to the pool hall, and/or missed Sunday services. Either he was especially observant, or he had a good system of informants.

Porter had a new extracurricular assignment during the 1909-10 year. He was to aid in finding housing for students. He advertised in the *Current-Journal* for anyone with a room to rent to contact him. He

noted that some students, in addition to paying rent, would be willing to work for board.

The Friday theology hour was to follow a new format during the winter of 1909-10. One Friday would be a devotional and testimony meeting; the next would be "group meetings." The two types of meetings would alternate through the winter, presumably to maintain an interest level in both. "The groups already arranged for were announced by Principal Dalby as follows: dramatics, consisting chiefly of a series of readings from our best dramatists; a biography group under the direction of O. C. Dalby will devote their attention to the lives of famous men and women; Arthur Porter, Jr., will conduct a science group, the purpose of which is to investigate the newest achievements in the scientific world."

Porter spoke to students on November 9 about "common Indian corn or maize." He explained how the corn was used in the manufacture of several products, and he had several products with him for illustration purposes. That satisfied the scientific part of his assignment. For the religious part he spoke in devotional on Friday, December 3. "He read from Isaiah, 'How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, who publisheth peace, who bringeth tidings of good cheer.' The value of cheer and good will was emphasized and the students were enjoined to speak well of one another or not speak at all."

By April 1910, in time for the annual clean-up, Porter's noted ability to make grounds look nice was institutionalized with his appointment as chairman of the academy grounds committee. He directed the clean-up and the planting of 350 trees on the academy grounds for Arbor Day.

For the 1910-11 school year, Porter was assigned to teach geometry in addition to science and German. For the next three years, all he taught was German. The commencement issue of *Student Rays* in May 1912 noted that Porter was "one of Ricksie's oldest instructors, editor of the county's official newspaper, and superintendent of Sunday School. Previously, he gave most of his efforts to aiding us in the great cause of 'accumulating savvy,' but, during the last year, he has been able to spare us only enough of his time to instruct our classes in German." The February 1914 issue noted:

Porter (in German class): Will you decline "ein glas bier"?

Student: I never have yet.

The end of the 1913-14 school year marked a rather radical change in the faculty of Ricks Academy. For about two years, a sentiment had been developing that the faculty at the academy was becoming too liberal. That meant that they seemed to be accepting, if not teaching, "evolution" and "higher criticism." The board of education decided to replace Dalby and most of the faculty. Of fourteen teachers, only Porter, Howard M. Sundberg, and Ray L. Ormsby were retained under the new principal A. B. Christenson. He hired another eleven teachers.

The 1914-15 school year got off to a good start as far as the faculty were concerned. A social was held so all new teachers could become acquainted with each other and the new principal. After visiting and eating, they were treated to the lovely singing of Nelle Porter.

Porter taught mathematics, German, and theology during the 1914-15 year. He received the following note from one of his theology students dated October 29, 1914: "Dear Teacher, Please excuse me from theology yesterday because I had a misfortune with my glasses and was unable to study and had a headache. Your student, Stephen Meikle."

Porter taught only German again in 1915-16. He resigned at the end of the 1916 school year from teaching at the academy, but his involvement with the school would continue in many capacities, including printing many materials for the school such as *Student Rays* and later the *Rixida*. He also printed the Ricks College Catalogue for many years and was a part-time teacher on occasion.

As a member of the Rexburg City Council in 1916, Porter was involved in building College Avenue. Many anticipated that opening that street would facilitate and accelerate building of the newly authorized gymnasium building on campus. Porter encouraged the project in his newspaper and in casual and formal conversation with members of the local board of education. Early in 1918, the building was completed enough to use. It would not be dedicated until November 22, 1919, under the direction of Apostle George A. Smith. Prior to that date, however, the new principal, George S. Romney, announced that

henceforth the school would be known as Ricks College rather than Ricks Academy.

On May 28, 1920, Ricks College alumni gathered in Rexburg for an annual reunion. "Members of former classes of the college gathered to participate in the annual banquet and ball and renew their fealty to their alma mater. Nearly two hundred were seated at the banquet tables and twice as many met at the dance. A special feature of this year's meeting was the reunion of the entire graduating class of 1910, this being just ten years since their graduation, and they were carrying out a plan agreed upon when they graduated. Every member was present." There were twelve members of the class, two boys and ten girls. Porter was on the program and told the story of the class of 1910 and his memories of the class.

Porter taught French in 1924 at the college. In 1925 he taught German. Both classes were taught on a part-time basis.

With Porter's calling to the Fremont Stake Presidency in 1925, his affiliation with Ricks College took on another dimension. Members of the stake presidency were called to serve on the local board of education of the college. His appointment came in 1926. One of his first assignments in the capacity of a member of the board was to travel, in company with Peter J. Ricks, to the small communities surrounding Rexburg to recruit for the college. Increasing the number of students at the college was important because the Church authorities had "under consideration plans for expanding the college provided there is sufficient support to justify this development. The present effort is to make a survey of the district and learn the number of students who would attend. The committee has found enthusiastic support of the institution in the sections visited. It stands in high favor and there is a general desire to see it grow. Many young people are planning to attend."

The October 29, 1926, board meeting was important for organizational purposes. The Church Board of Education had decided that Ricks College would be the official Church school in Idaho and that each stake president would be called to serve on the local board. The response to that was favorable as it seemed to signal permanency for the college. An executive committee was appointed with John W. Hart, president; Albert Choules, vice-president; George H. Lowe and Porter.

Porter would serve on the committee during its entire existence. President Romney would be an ex-officio member of the executive committee and all other sub-committees. Porter was also appointed to the finance standing committee.

At the November 5, 1926, board of education meeting, some changes were authorized in the college auditorium located in the gymnasium building. It had been poorly designed with a small stage, a flat floor so those seated toward the back could not see a performance very well, and had several wooden pillars which supported the gym floor above but cut off the view of the stage. Porter wrote about the remodeling and the result:

President Romney was very anxious to have this auditorium improved but the Church indicated they would not participate in the expense. The matter was considered by the board but the cost seemed prohibitive. Oswald Christensen outlined a cheap plan that would have two posts. I went to Idaho Falls to see my friend Howard Sundberg the architect. He was a former teacher at Ricks and was interested and proposed replacing the posts with great steel I-beams. He drew a plan and estimated the job to cost \$6,000. He offered to supervise the installation and join us in a donation of his services.

The executive board discussed the matter at a special session. The president thought \$1,000 could be spared out of the year's budget. [I] proposed raising \$500 or more by installing an advertising curtain across the front of the stage. It was estimated we could raise \$1,500 or more in labor contributed. Also, some money could be raised by entertainment. So the board decided to go ahead.

In due course, the job was completed and the auditorium was more enjoyable; the stage was enlarged; the advertising netted approximately \$700. It [the advertising curtain] remained a year or more before it was removed and was replaced by a decorative curtain.

The architect assured us the I-beams were strong enough to carry a freight train, but, when I saw the great crowds that danced up there, I wondered how the walls would be affected by the vibration caused by some of the dances such as the Berlin Polka. I realized how unwise it was to build a large and popular dance hall in the top of the building. Also, the exit down the stairway from this was a firetrap. Most of the young people, especially teenagers from the surrounding area, danced there. Also, one evening when I went up to the building the hall was filled to overflowing with scouts and scouters. When seated, not only were all the tiers of benches around the hall occupied, but hundreds were sitting on the floor. In fact, most of the hall was thus occupied. It was a sight to see. But I could

not enjoy it and regretted that I had been so active in promoting this improvement in such a badly constructed building.

My sons were in that overcrowded scout meeting. My sons and daughters danced there. I worried a lot but did not feel justified in making public my concern and thereby putting a "wet blanket" on this public enterprise. It was a genuine relief to me when I heard that the city fire department had declared the dance hall and exit as a fire hazard and limited its use for large crowds.

After the November 5 meeting of the board of education, Porter participated in the festivities of the annual Founder's Day program. Sporting activities, a parade, and a commemoration at the tabernacle recalled the history of the college. A "grand ball" climaxed the program.

On Monday night, February 7, 1927, a special ceremony took place on campus. A big bonfire rally was held to celebrate completion of the remodeling project in the gymnasium building. Many speeches were made intended to arouse increased loyalty to the school. At least one of the wooden pillars was burned on the fire. Members of the executive board were very much evident with gratitude shown for their leadership in providing for the remodeling.

The executive committee's next major project was to arrange for the installation of a gas heating plant to heat the laboratories. Porter was especially pleased with the development as he had spent several years in the laboratories and knew how uncomfortable they were, especially in winter.

Late in 1927 the executive committee approved plans for the college to purchase adjoining land for an athletic field. The Chamber of Commerce pledged its members to raise \$8,000 for the undertaking. However, there was some strong opposition from those who felt the city park, where the college had held sporting events for some time, was adequate. They argued that the city was not large enough to support two sporting fields. Regardless of arguments to the contrary, plans were pushed along to establish a building fund for a college field. It would be some time before the plans were fulfilled.

The Ricks College Board of Education approved the following resolution at its March 14, 1928, meeting:

Whereas, the board of education of the Ricks College has received official information that the Madison High School is prepared to establish third-year high school work and desires to do so the coming year.

Therefore, in view of these facts, the Ricks College will readjust its curriculum featuring hereafter college courses and fourth-year high school course. Courses will still be offered for students lacking three years of high school work.

In 1928, Porter had become affiliated again with Ricks College in a teaching capacity. "In the morning I teach two classes in French at the college," Porter noted. "The second year class meets at 7:30 a.m. and the first year at 8:20 to 9:05. I have twelve to fifteen in each class and am giving heavy courses. I have all written work read by Stanford Blaylock, a student."

During the latter months of 1929 and into early 1930, as the national and state financial picture became more and more gloomy, rumors were passed along that the Church Board of Education was going to close Ricks College. Despite the rumors, the local board decided at their March 18, 1930, meeting to allow a summer school to operate in June and July.

The rumors of closing persisted. To get direct information, about twenty men from the community representing the board of education, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations traveled to Salt Lake City for an arranged meeting with President Heber J. Grant and his counselors along with Joseph F. Merrill, commissioner of Church education. The meeting was held in President Grant's office on April 8.

President John W. Hart explained how the rumors that the college was to be closed had circulated through the Upper Snake River Valley and had a "detrimental effect on attendance at the college." The Rexburg representatives, as reported in the *Rexburg Journal*, were assured "that at no time had any date been considered by the Church Board of Education for closing Ricks College. On the contrary, they said, there were four Church schools in Utah and only one in Idaho, and we could be assured that, if any more Church schools were closed, Ricks College would be among the last. They had felt personally that there should be a Church school in Idaho if the funds of the Church were sufficient to continue these schools. They also assured the

committee that any other action with reference to the continuance of Ricks College would be communicated direct[ly] to the board and that no attention should be given to any other reports and rumors."

To further appease those in the Upper Snake River Valley, President Hart announced that the appropriation for another school year had been made. President Romney was authorized to hire teachers, including a football coach, and a recruiting campaign to increase student numbers got underway. Everyone was optimistic about the future of the college. A newspaper reported that "it is indeed gratifying to hear the rejoicing on all sides from all quarters at the glad word that the dear old Ricks is to remain. From every part of the Upper Snake River Valley the sounds of joy are heard."

The Ricks College Board of Education called a special meeting on Monday, July 21, to appoint an acting president for the college. President Romney had been granted a leave of absence to commence September 1. The board appointed Hyrum Manwaring as acting president. At the meeting, President Romney gave an optimistic report on the condition of the college.

On August 15, the Porters had a dinner party in their home to honor President Romney and his wife. The affair was well attended and the Romney's were pleased with the consideration shown.

On September 1, 1930, the executive committee met pursuant to a call of President Hart. President Manwaring met with the board for the first time as an ex-officio member. A decision was finalized to proceed with the purchase of "a plot of ground west of the college for an athletic field and a committee was appointed to make negotiations immediately with a view of acquiring this property."

The college opened for its forty-third year on September 22. Faculty and students gathered at the opening assembly to hear Porter, on behalf of the board of education, give "an enthusiastic address. He complimented the students present on their attendance at this fine Idaho institution. He spoke in very complimentary terms of President Hyrum Manwaring and his corps of able teachers. He was very optimistic in his assurance to the students that Ricks College would be permanently maintained and continue to wield a mighty influence for good among the people of the great Snake River Valley." It was a

prophetic message that would be sorely tried several times in ensuing years.

The board of education further implemented a program of improvements to the physical plant of the college by completing the purchase of a new heating system in November 1930. Installation began immediately.

By November 1930, there was not much doubt that the continuance of the college was tenuous indeed. The Church Board of Education had recommended that the college be presented to the state of Idaho for inclusion in the state education system. President Hart agreed that that was a viable solution rather than simply closing the school. Hart, well known in state Republican political circles, and Porter (now mayor of Rexburg), well known in state Democratic political circles, spent much time in Boise lobbying for the state to assume control of the school. On January 16, 1931, the Idaho Senate began debate on the bill transferring Ricks College to the state. The House passed the bill; the Senate defeated it. Hart made a quick trip to Salt Lake City and received assurance that the school would be funded to operate until the state legislature met in 1933 when another attempt would be made to give it to the state.

Hyrum Manwaring was confirmed by the Church Board of Education as president of Ricks College on May 6, 1931. Romney would not be returning to the school; he was called to preside over the Northern States Mission in Chicago. President Manwaring had one overriding goal — save Ricks College.

On September 9, 1931, a large group met at the Idamont Hotel to discuss again the merits of buying land for a college athletic field, especially if it was just to be given to the state. Porter gave a “spirited talk” in favor of the acquisition as did others. Agreement was reached and donations in the amount of \$565 were made at the end of the meeting with Porter setting the example. A committee had been appointed to raise additional funds. The field was finally purchased and an athletic field was soon available and used during the school year.

On September 16, 1932, at nine o’clock in the morning, the Ricks College faculty met in the opening session of a three-day institute to prepare for the opening of school. They discussed the problems facing

the school and possible solutions. Porter attended the opening meeting and "gave them the greetings and advice of the board of education."

Hart and Porter attended the opening of the legislative session in January 1933, again to lobby legislators to take Ricks College into the state education system. A ringing declaration had been issued by the *Rexburg Journal*: "It may be problematic whether Ricks College should be continued under church or state auspices, but it is not a question whether it should be maintained. The school must go on, and it is our job to find the plan and put it through. This is not a one-man job either. Every citizen of the upper valley and all of southeastern Idaho should be enthusiastic to preserve this educational asset and lend every influence to promote its further growth and usefulness. Every man, woman, and child should be ready to bear the Ricks College banner, shout her slogan, and vigorously fight for a definite plan that will ensure its perpetuity and future usefulness. Let us unfurl and fling this slogan to the Idaho breeze: 'Ricks College — Ours — Now and Forever!'" Despite the declaration and the personal lobbying effort, the state again refused the gift of Ricks College.

The board of education issued a call for a mass meeting at the tabernacle on Sunday afternoon, March 19, at four o'clock. A large number attended to discuss a central issue: What should be done about Ricks College? The Church had determined to discontinue its junior colleges. The state did not want the school. The only thing to do was operate with local financial support if it was to be operated at all. The sentiment was overwhelming in favor of continued operation. Committees were established to aid the board of education which effectively assumed control and administration of the school. Porter agreed to serve on the finance committee along with J. E. Graham, chairman; Delbert G. Taylor, P. C. Craven, and J. E. Jensen. Other committees were enrollment and publicity. A central committee with Peter J. Ricks, chairman, had overall jurisdiction.

The board of education journeyed again to Salt Lake City and met with the First Presidency and Commissioner Merrill to see if the Church could possibly aid the school again. The board explained their plans to see to the continued operation of the college and the extent of local support. The Church leaders were impressed with the

determination shown and agreed to allow the college to operate under the local board with some Church financial support.

Several important decisions were made at the May 15 meeting of the board. The faculty were to be hired and the budget for the year was approved. They decided to increase the number of board members by appointing two local men. The central committee was to make recommendations and the president of the board would make the appointment.

On August 23, 1933, the board met to go over plans with President Manwaring for the ensuing school year. Everything seemed to be ready, and the board was confident that Ricks would have a great year. Community support, in the face of a deepening financial depression, was gratifying.

The board met on March 15, 1934, to assess the past year when the college had been under their direct control. They were pleased with the way the college had been administered by President Manwaring but concerned about the next term. They decided they had no recourse but to proceed as if everything would work out. They made plans for improving the physical facilities as well as maintaining the financial integrity of the institution. When school started in the fall, enrollment had dramatically increased, much to everyone's delight.

In January 1935, Porter again went to Boise, lobbied legislators to accept Ricks, but again was disappointed. However, he and other members of the board followed the established pattern of seeking, successfully, for Church and community financial support. The college "got by" another year. In March 1936, the executive board met with President Manwaring and heard his report on the school. They agreed "that the outlook for Ricks College is brighter than for a number of years past."

A change in the executive committee of the board of education took place in April 1936. President Hart died, and Peter J. Ricks became president of the committee.

In April 1936, the board was pleased with the announcement that the North Western Association of Secondary and Higher Schools had granted full accreditation to Ricks College. They seemed to vindicate all the sacrifices made to maintain a quality program.

In January 1937, Porter returned to Boise. By this time he must have felt like a veteran lobbyist. The state turned down the offer to take Ricks College again. The Church and community again helped and the executive committee of the board had direct control of the college for another year.

The Church assumed control of the college again in 1938. The executive committee was discontinued before the 1938-39 school year, but the local board was retained with Porter still a member. He recognized that the local board was just a figurehead board during the school year, but neither he nor the others minded a bit. President Hyrum Manwaring had written a letter to each board member on November 17, 1938, thanking them for their service, expressing confidence in the reorganized Church educational structure, and asking for "future loyalty even though you may no longer be an administrative officer." The local board was disbanded before the beginning of the 1939-40 school year. The crisis, apparently, had passed.

The Ricks College seventeenth annual "Leadership Week" was held February 14, 15, and 16, 1939. The last several had been held under circumstances leaving people wondering if each one would be the last. By 1939, the future of the college and "Leadership Week" seemed assured. The theme illustrated the optimistic attitude — "Self reliant and charged with new ideas, strong, ambitious, and fervent faith, we press forward, asking no favors, but opportunity to work." Porter was in charge of the Church welfare department which met each day from 10:00 to 10:50 a.m. Speakers included David A. Smith, president of the Idaho Falls Stake, and Presiding Bishop LeGrand Richards. Porter made introductions and conducted the sessions.

Not only had Porter been involved with the seventeenth "Leadership Week," but he had undoubtedly attended the previous sixteen. He would continue to support that kind of educational activity until near the end of his life.

Ricks College would have some stability during the 1940s although the world war would disrupt the male-female ratio. A four-year curriculum was commenced with the third year added for the 1948-49 school year and the fourth the following year. In 1954, school administrators were notified that the school would revert to a junior college again. The last baccalaureate degrees were awarded in August

1956. Then rumors started that the school was to be closed altogether or moved to Idaho Falls. The move to Idaho Falls rumor proved to be true. Porter was very much involved emotionally and intellectually with the controversy created by the announced move to Idaho Falls. But he was satisfied to encourage his sons to leadership in the anti-move crusade, a crusade that spanned a few years chronologically, but a millennia emotionally. Success attended the efforts of those who argued so well for retention of the college in Rexburg and, to the date of this publication, there has been no further discussion of removal of the college.

Porter, writing in 1957, summarized his relationship to Ricks College: "I have participated in every crisis that the school has passed through in the past fifty-five years." Indeed he had, and by his participation had helped ameliorate each crisis.

Porter was a special guest of honor at the Ricks College commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 24, 1962. He was presented a Distinguished Service Award by President John L. Clarke. He was only the fourth in the seventy-four year history of the college to be so honored. His commendation noted his extensive service to the college, the city, county, and state. Earlier in the day Porter had joined the Class of 1912 in their fifty-year reunion. He was honored by the six members of the class and enjoyed participating in discussing experiences of fifty years before. The six present were: Lorenzo Parker, Cleone E. Dalby, J. Orval Ellsworth, Cyral A. Watson, J. Henry Hansen, and Edward C. Phillips.

Ground was broken in June 1962 with appropriate ceremony for a new library on the college campus. On December 11, 1963, the library was dedicated by Elder Marion G. Romney and named the David O. McKay Library. Porter was again honored by the college by having the beautiful 192-seat lecture room on the second floor named the Arthur Porter Lecture Room. The citation sent to the Church Board of Education noted that Porter "has always been an ardent supporter of Ricks College and of numerous good causes. Now in his eighty-sixth year, he is widely and rightly considered one of the great characters of the Upper Snake River Valley." The Porter Room was the setting for a reception after the dedicatory program was completed. Several members of Porter's family were present to add their

congratulations. The tribute that the lecture room in the library be associated with Porter was especially fitting. He had, for a good many years, approached the problems associated with public service as an academic.

4

Rexburg Religious Leader

When Porter moved to Rexburg in 1902, he and his wife resided in the first ward. Porter was to live within shifting boundaries of first ward for the rest of his life. Shortly after moving into the ward, Porter was called to the position of Sunday School chorister. He also led the ward choir for a few months.

Porter was asked to be superintendent of the Fremont Stake Academy Sunday School. The academy Sunday School was "organized to provide a more satisfactory opportunity for students who came from a distance, as the local Sunday School was not so well prepared to take care of them." Porter's two counselors were chosen from the student body and were "able assistants and not much younger" than Porter. The superintendency was under the direction of the Fremont Stake Sunday School Superintendent, Ernest Bramwell. Porter noted with satisfaction that for the school year "we were fully organized and administered the sacrament."

Porter served as academy Sunday School superintendent until November 5, 1905, when, according to Church records, he was appointed Sunday School superintendent of Rexburg First Ward. His first counselor was an elderly man, Edmund Paul. His second counselor was Fred S. Parkinson, a young man who became Porter's

"lifelong friend." The two had first become friends in Preston, Idaho. Luella Waldram was called to be ward Sunday School secretary. Being called as Sunday School superintendent had special significance to Porter as his superintendency was the first in the new rock building of first ward.

Porter acknowledged the part that academy principal and stake Sunday School superintendent, Ezra Dalby, played in his appointment. Dalby "saw to it that I got this appointment," Porter explained, "and also he discontinued the academy Sunday School. His theory was that local school would be improved under the direction of a professional and younger man, and he had considerable confidence in me."

Porter and his counselors began at once to put into effect the complete program of the Deseret Union. We held weekly preparation meetings where outlines were studied and methods of teaching were discussed. I insisted on attendance and preparation. This resulted in the release of several inefficient elderly members whose classes were uninteresting and disorderly and substitution of more competent teachers. I insisted on order in school and occasionally took a hand in disciplining unruly children. This, I believe, I sometimes overdid. Two or three instances, at least, I remember and regret to this day as it may have caused individuals to resent the Church, at least the benefits of the Sunday School.

No Sunday School was conducted without previous preparation. We endeavored to make the sessions interesting and carry out the complete program of the Deseret Union. I attended practically every session of the semi-annual conferences of the Church. I was a young man, energetic, ambitious, and proud of my position as superintendent of a Sunday School.

Along with his Sunday School duties, Porter was involved with numerous other projects relating to the Church. He was a popular speaker at various ward meetings. Often he used scientific themes to illustrate gospel principles.

One thing that surprised and usually irritated Porter was when religion became current political fodder. The 1908 election in the state illustrates this facet of Porter's personality. Moses Alexander, former mayor of Boise and of a reformed Jewish faith, sought the Democratic nomination for Governor of Idaho. He was accused of heading the "Mormon ticket" by Fred T. Dubois who wanted the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. After an Idaho Supreme Court decision declared Alexander the legal candidate, Dubois escalated his anti-

Mormon rhetoric. Interestingly, Alexander was accused of being pro-Mormon by the Dubois faction and accused of being anti-Mormon by many in the Upper Snake River Valley.

Porter, as publisher and editor of the *Current-Journal* and a staunch Democrat, reported Alexander's campaign in Rexburg on October 1, 1908. Later in the month, Porter understood that church and state were being mixed, and he voiced his opinion in no uncertain terms. Women of the Fremont Stake Relief Society were reported organizing against Alexander. They were, according to information Porter received, going from door to door throughout the stake voicing their belief that Alexander was actually in league with the hated Dubois and therefore anti-Mormon. An angered Porter evidently confronted Matilda Flamm, stake Relief Society president, who disclaimed any official Relief Society involvement with the campaign. Porter obviously was not satisfied with the disclaimer as he editorialized in the October 29, 1908, *Current-Journal* that the whole affair was a "contemptible" Republican campaign trick and called upon the Republicans to "fight a manly open campaign as the Democrats do. For shame's sake, do not trot the women over our cities doing your dirty contemptible work. Who was the pinheaded, small souled hybrid that worm-like crawled in the filth to evolve such a low order of thought?" Alexander lost the election. There would be other opportunities for Porter to voice his displeasure with religion used for political purposes.

Early in July 1909, Porter was appointed to the executive committee of the Pioneer Day celebration to be held on July 24. Oscar Kirkham was chairman and Peter Mickelson served on the committee. They were empowered to make arrangements and appoint committees to help. That first Pioneer Day with which Porter was involved "gave general satisfaction." The events of the day ran smoothly as Mormon pioneers were honored. Because of the large number of people attracted to Rexburg for the celebration, special police were hired, "but it was not necessary to make any arrests." Porter would be involved with Pioneer Day activities and Fourth of July celebrations for many years.

On Sunday, February 27, 1910, Stephen L. Richards was in town. He was a member of the Sunday School superintendency of the LDS Church. Superintendent Porter was called upon to report the progress of the first ward Sunday School which he did with satisfaction.

Porter often got the opportunity to report to General Authorities, especially at stake conference. Apostles David O. McKay and Francis M. Lyman were the presiding authorities at the September 27 and 28, 1913, conference. Porter reported the activities of the first ward Sunday School. In the evening of September 28, Nelle sang a solo in the MIA session held in the tabernacle.

On March 27, 1917, ward conference was held in the first ward. Stake authorities visited all auxiliary meetings. Porter explained the progress of the Sunday School. Nelle was sustained as the new president of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association.

Porter was ward Sunday School superintendent for almost sixteen years. He was released on Sunday, July 3, 1921. The first ward Sunday School officers and teachers held a surprise party in the basement of the tabernacle to honor Porter. He was presented a signet ring bearing the inscription, "Superintendent First Ward Sunday School 1905 to 1921." But he did not get to rest on his laurels. He was soon sustained as Fremont Stake Sunday School Superintendent. As such, he was involved in organizing and reorganizing several ward Sunday Schools. On Sunday, March 19, 1922, Porter assisted in organizing a Sunday School in Thornton.

On Monday, October 22, 1923, at 10:15 in the morning, services commenced in the Idaho Falls tabernacle commemorating the opening of Idaho Falls LDS Hospital. Porter was in attendance along with some one thousand others representing the seven stakes in the hospital district. Each stake president spoke expressing gratitude. Some sermonized about the word of wisdom which, if lived properly, would mean less patients for the hospital. Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about the ecumenical purpose of the hospital. "The hospital will be open to the people of all creeds, and the beliefs of the Latter-day Saints will not be forced upon those who enter it," he said. "All doctors will be welcome to practice in the hospital if they are sufficiently skillful and have the proper moral standing."

Idaho's Governor C. C. Moore had been invited to the dedication. He was unable to attend but sent a telegram congratulating those involved with planning and building the facility. "I trust that you will meet with a great measure of success, and I know that your work will

be humanitarian in the relief of suffering, the binding up of the wounds of the people, and the soothing of the sorrows of all mankind," he wrote. "May God bless you in this work."

The dedicatory address was delivered by President Heber J. Grant who expressed gratitude that the "Latter-day Saints have paid their tithing and provided funds sufficient to complete this wonderful work." He noted the growth of the LDS population in the Upper Snake River Valley and noted that the hospital was for their use as well as the use of all citizens. He concluded by asking the "Lord to bless those who have contributed to the hospital." After the speeches were concluded, President Grant offered the dedicatory prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer, Porter joined in a small group for a tour through the hospital.

On August 11, 1925, Porter and his wife entertained members of the stake Sunday School board at a party in their home. They played games and ate light refreshments. That was to be the last entertaining Porter would do as stake Sunday School superintendent.

Sunday, September 27, 1925, an important date in the life of Arthur Porter, Jr., was the second day of Fremont Stake's conference. The morning session, presided over by Apostle Melvin J. Ballard, was routine although there had to have been rumors about important stake changes to take place in the afternoon session. Between the two sessions, the stake Sunday School, under Porter's direction, served lunch in the tabernacle basement. The afternoon session commenced at 2:00 p.m. When the appropriate time to conduct stake business arrived, Elder Ballard took the stand. He announced the honorable release of Stake President Mark Austin and his counselors James Blake and Nathan Ricks. Also released as stake clerk was Horace Manwaring. Elder Ballard then stilled all speculation by announcing the calling of George S. Romney to be the new president of Fremont Stake of Zion. His first counselor was Peter J. Ricks, his second counselor, Arthur Porter, Jr., with Vern V. Duke called as stake clerk. When the sustaining vote of the membership was called for, the response was unanimous in the affirmative.

The new stake presidency would have a new ward to shepherd along with the rest of the wards. Elder Ballard announced creation of Rexburg Fourth Ward with H. C. Blunck as bishop and counselors

David W. Stowell and Fred Schwendiman, and ward clerk, C. A. Watson. Members of the new fourth ward sustained their bishopric.

Porter was released from his calling as stake Sunday School superintendent; he was replaced by William E. Gee.

On Thursday, October 8, the new stake presidency entertained the released presidency at a dinner at President Romney's home. The next night stake members were invited to a farewell testimonial and social honoring the outgoing presidency. They were given gifts and words of appreciation for twenty years of service. This show of appreciation was a fitting climax to their ecclesiastical service.

The first quarterly conference presided over by the new stake presidency was in mid-December 1925. The visiting authority was the very interesting J. Golden Kimball. Each member of the stake presidency addressed the congregation at the request of Elder Kimball.

Porter was a speaker at the funeral of Bishop George Hibbard who died in Pocatello on January 7, 1926. Bishop Hibbard had come to Rexburg in 1884 and was made presiding elder of Salem Ward. Later he became bishop of Island Ward. A few years later the name of the ward was changed to Hibbard to honor the bishop. Porter paid tribute to the pioneer bishop as he spoke in the tabernacle on January 11.

On February 4, 1926, a meeting of stake presidencies from the several southeastern Idaho stakes was held in Rexburg. One concern discussed was the rates charged by the Oregon Short Line Railroad Company for passenger service to Salt Lake City. A petition was drawn up and signed by each stake president asking for reduced rates, at least for those attending the semi-annual General Conferences of the Church. The petition was sent to D. S. Spenser, general passenger agent of the Union Pacific Railroad Company which operated the Oregon Short Line. To bolster their position, President Porter corresponded with President Heber J. Grant about the petition and asked if he could "assist somewhat in getting the matter properly considered by the Union Pacific officials." President Grant responded that he wrote to Spenser "expressing the hope that favorable action would be taken upon this petition." The railroad officials did respond by lowering rates from Rexburg to Salt Lake City during conference weeks.

On March 12 and 13, 1926, about one hundred members with about fifty teams of horses gathered at the tabernacle. They had responded to a call from President Romney to work on the tabernacle grounds. According to Porter, "the tabernacle grounds were fifteen to eighteen inches lower than the sidewalk and grew a crop of grass that was cut for hay or pastured to cows." Dirt was hauled in to bring the level up to the sidewalk. "Alf Carlson and crew laid the sprinkling system, also contributing their labor," Porter recalled. "The ground was raked and planted to grass. H. C. Pieper, the custodian, later planted flowers, shrubs, and trees and thus were developed the beautiful grounds that we admire and enjoy today. Rexburg owes this improvement to the energy and leadership of President Romney and the cooperation of many men and women he was able to secure. The expense was for piping and seeds that had to be bought." Porter considered beautifying the tabernacle grounds as a major accomplishment of the stake presidency.

When Apostle David O. McKay arrived for stake conference on March 27 and 28, the tabernacle grounds looked nice. He complimented the stake presidency and stake membership on the impressive work. Porter spoke in the afternoon conference session.

During priesthood meeting on Sunday, September 12, 1926, President Romney presented a plan endorsed by the stake presidency to add a balcony in the tabernacle to seat about four hundred. The stake priesthood sustained the stake presidency as they were well aware that the stake membership could not all fit into the tabernacle for stake conference meetings. The need for a balcony was further emphasized that Sunday evening when some two hundred stake members could not squeeze into the tabernacle to hear President Heber J. Grant speak. President Grant was on his way back to Salt Lake City from meetings in Driggs. He compared this visit to the first time he had come to Rexburg forty-three years previous.

At special meetings Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, September 28, 29, and 30, held at Teton, Salem, and Lyman wards, respectively, the stake presidency reorganized each bishopric. Ward members were called into special session those evenings to sustain new bishoprics.

A notice over the signature of the stake presidency appeared in the *Rexburg Journal* November 19, 1926, calling for bids on the tabernacle balcony construction. Bidders could pick up specifications at the office of Sundberg and Sundberg, architects, or at Porter's Book Store. Bids would close at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 27. The successful bidder was within the limits set and, by mid-December, work was progressing on the balcony. Concrete posts were installed to hold the steel beams to support the balcony. The construction was somewhat disruptive of stake conference held December 18 and 19 with Apostle George F. Richards presiding, but stake members had provided funds for the project and were happy to see progress being made. Elder Richards was told that work was expected to be completed in time for the annual Leadership Week to begin on February 8, 1927. Presidents Romney and Porter were speakers at the conference. President Ricks was on a three-month mission in Memphis, Tennessee.

The tabernacle balcony was completed on schedule. Stake members admired the work as they gathered for Leadership Week.

Porter attended General Conference sessions in Salt Lake City in April 1927 representing the stake presidency. He appreciated the opportunity to go to Church headquarters in an official capacity and enjoyed the experience.

The next big project of the stake presidency was to purchase and install an organ in the tabernacle. After assessing several organs, the presidency settled on a \$6,000 pipe organ manufactured by Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut. Installation began late in December 1927 and was finished, under a company expert's direction, by January 6, 1928. That evening the stake presidency and stake members thrilled to beautiful music as Edward P. Kimball, one of the Salt Lake City tabernacle organists, played a recital on the new instrument.

The Flat Rock campsite on the Snake River, about two miles west of Mack's Inn in Island Park, was the setting for the annual fathers' and sons' outing on July 18, 1928. The campsite was "a beautiful location on the river, good shade, wood, and fair fishing." The campfire program "consisting of talks, songs, etc.," was under the direction of E. West Parkinson, an attorney who had recently opened a law office in rooms above Porter's Book Store. Presidents Ricks and

Porter were in attendance and were honored by the fathers and sons by having the camp named the "Ricks-Porter" camp.

The doldrums of winter were alleviated somewhat when stake clerk Vern Duke and his wife entertained the stake presidency and their wives on the evening of February 20, 1929. They all enjoyed a three-course dinner.

On Sunday, October 27, 1929, President Porter and Oswald Christensen traveled to Pocatello to represent Fremont Stake and Ricks College at dedicatory services for the LDS seminary adjacent to University of Idaho Southern Branch (later Idaho State University). President Heber J. Grant presided and offered the dedicatory prayer. He spoke about the purpose of seminary being to teach gospel principles. He explained that the program was available to all students "whether Church members or not." One observer noted that "his whole talk showed a feeling of good will and broad-mindedness." Porter and Christensen later reported having a "very enjoyable trip."

The stake presidency announced a special genealogy program in each ward of Fremont Stake to be held on Sunday evening, December 29, 1929. Purpose of the meeting was to remind stake members of the blessings of temple marriage. Speakers were assigned to treat the topic in each ward. President Porter was assigned to second ward.

The stake presidency asked for support from the stake Aaronic Priesthood to raise and donate funds to construct a baptismal font in the tabernacle. The campaign began in the fall of 1929. By late in the year, construction was underway. The font was ready for the stake baptism on Friday, January 3, 1930.

January 22, 1930, the stake presidency and wives gathered at President Ricks' home for a social. "Games and social conversation" were accompanied by a "delicious turkey dinner."

President Porter was involved in a variety of activities over the next several months. Sunday, March 30, he spoke in fourth ward on the topic "One hundred Years of Progress in Temple Work." On Wednesday, April 30, he presented awards at the Fathers' and Sons' Banquet held in the tabernacle. Thursday, May 29, he participated in the cornerstone laying ceremony for fourth ward's building. Apostle Stephen L. Richards gave the address to about eight hundred people. President Porter pronounced the benediction. Tuesday, September 30,

President Porter was a speaker at the funeral of John Hegsted held in the tabernacle.

Wednesday, February 18, 1931, President Porter was featured speaker at the Brigham Young College alumni's annual banquet. Some four hundred people attended the banquet held in the fourth ward church. Porter was elected assistant editor of the alumni association publication *Crimson*.

Changes were made in the stake organization during the Sunday afternoon session of stake conference held June 21, 1931. Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith presided and announced the honorable release of the Fremont Stake Presidency. Peter J. Ricks was called as new stake president; Porter was called as first counselor; Oswald Christensen as second counselor; and F. L. Davis as stake clerk. Stake members unanimously sustained the new presidency.

The new stake presidency was entertained by the High Council Wednesday evening, September 2, 1931. Festivities began at Ricks College where visiting and games created a jovial mood. Later the group met in the fourth ward's cultural hall for a chicken dinner.

President Porter represented the stake presidency at the Independence Ward Conference Sunday evening, October 25. Accompanied by Fred S. Parkinson and Arnold Westover they "gave timely advice to all present."

Sunday, October 30, 1932, President Porter attended the stake genealogy convention. Four sessions were held throughout the day. James Kirkham and Mark Petersen were visiting authorities from the Church General Board in Salt Lake City. "I was impressed to do some research work and start keeping records," stated President Porter. "Started today to prepare a book of remembrance and have entered what data I could find. Also started to keep a diary of events, especially those in which I have a part."

Sunday evening, November 6, the stake presidency traveled to Plano to attend ward conference to conduct important business. Plano Ward's bishopric was released and a new bishopric was sustained. President Porter spoke during the meeting, noting with satisfaction that "forty-eight percent of the ward population is in attendance."

Sunday evening, November 13, President Porter was in Teton Ward. His traveling companion was L. Y. Rigby, secretary of the stake

High Priests quorum. Attending Teton Ward was a special assignment for President Porter as he was able to visit with Charles Olsen, the ward clerk, who was a schoolmate of Porter in his New Zealand years. They enjoyed reminiscing about their experiences there.

February 10, 1933, President and Mrs. Porter were special guests in the home of Peter Andregg. Andregg was president of the stake German organization. Porter thoroughly enjoyed that opportunity to practice his German.

Late in January 1933, Porter was in Idaho Falls to attend a meeting of the LDS Hospital's board of directors. Having been appointed to the board in 1927, he had been regularly involved in routine hospital affairs. By early 1933, the hospital was feeling effects of the depression — not necessarily in a decreased number of patients, but in payment of bills. J. H. Trayner, hospital administrator, reported that the "public generally endorses the attitude of the city or county to refuse care for other than strictly indigent cases but thinks there is no excuse for the Church hospital not giving everyone free service or expect every consideration upon vague statements of 'pay you when I am able,' which is tantamount to charity." Furthermore, "the practice of paying every bill except hospital expense," Trayner concluded "is slowly killing the hospital that laid the Golden Health" [to paraphrase the Brothers Grimm]. The directors could do little about the situation which, in fact, did not get any better for several years. Porter served as a director until 1937, and externally imposed hospital charity continued all those years.

President Porter represented the stake presidency at April conference in Salt Lake City in 1934. He was usually the only stake presidency member to attend General Conference.

President Heber J. Grant was in Rexburg once again March 17, 1935. He dedicated the new fourth ward chapel. President Porter attended the meetings but did not have an active part in the service.

Sunday, March 24, 1935, quarterly conference was held with Elder Rulon S. Wells as presiding authority. President Porter met him at the train and escorted him to the tabernacle for morning session. Elder Wells and President Ricks joined the Porters for lunch which Nelle had prepared. Elder Wells spoke in the afternoon session and again at the "MIA Musical Festival at night." President Porter observed that "his sermons were interesting — much better than I remember of his

sermons in the past. He is past eighty-one years of age." Porter's son John was ordained a Seventy at the conference. Porter, called upon to address the afternoon session, "spoke on the 'Value and Importance of Testimony'." He recalled later, "I occupied a half hour and felt embarrassed as I infringed on the time. I spoke from notes and covered too much territory. The president said the talk was fine, but," Porter ruefully noted, "no one else did."

Over the years that Porter served in the stake presidency, he and Nelle entertained many Church authorities in their home during quarterly conference sessions. They always gave their bedroom to the visiting authorities and moved to an upstairs bedroom. As there were two sessions on Sunday, Nelle had to have a large dinner ready after the morning session to serve to the visiting authorities as well as members of the stake presidency. Because of this, she rarely was able to attend the morning conference sessions. Since the Porters had a large house in a convenient location on East Main Street, more than half of the time they were called upon to house the authorities as well as feed them. The girls in the family remember helping to serve the food at these large gatherings at conference time.

Apostle George F. Richards was presiding authority at stake conference Sunday, June 23, 1935. Changing the name of the stake from Fremont to Rexburg Stake was the most important item of business. The proposal was unanimously endorsed by stake members. The name change was recommended because of increasing confusion between Fremont Stake and Fremont County which was not within the stake boundary.

A parade held September 28, 1935, as part of a pioneer celebration, honored the first families coming into Rexburg over fifty years previous. Three pioneers of 1883: Fred Smith, Brigham Ricks, and Willard Ricks led the parade with the stake presidency next in line. A monument, prepared and placed near the tabernacle, was to be dedicated. Funds for the monument had been raised by the Rexburg Stake priesthood quorums. Apostle George Albert Smith was principal speaker and dedicated the monument. Elder Smith was chairman of Utah Trails and Landmarks Association which provided the copper plaque for the monument. Stake quarterly conference was held the

same weekend with Elder Smith presiding. Speakers carried out the theme of pioneers in the Upper Snake River Valley.

Sunday, October 13, 1935, was an interesting day for President Porter. He began by attending a Ricks College Board of Education meeting at 9:30 a.m. This was followed at 10:30 by a High Council prayer circle meeting followed by the regular meeting lasting until 12:30 or later. One matter of business for the High Council was calling a new bishop for the fourth ward as Bishop S. P. Oldham was "being released because of ill health." The stake presidency, meeting the evening of October 12, had discussed and voted on their choice for bishop. President Porter recorded that, at the evening meeting

we undertook to nominate a bishop, which is our prerogative, but did not come to a decision. The vote was as follows: President Peter J. Ricks and Clerk F. L. Davis voted for my son John C. Porter. Counselor Oswald Christensen voted for Parley Jamison, and I voted for George A. Hoopes. We could not agree as Brother Christensen was very much opposed to joining with the president's recommendation of John on the grounds that he was too young (twenty-three years). His nominee, Brother Jamison, was twenty-six. He is an exceptionally fine young man but a transient in this community, teaching in the Rexburg schools. The matter was therefore brought up to the High Council. Our vote was reported.

The High Council discussion proceeded when

Alva Larsen got up and nominated Delbert G. Taylor and said . . . he was strongly in favor of him. Others who lived in the fourth ward endorsed this proposal. They spoke favorably of John but thought he was young. Meeting adjourned without a decision, no other candidate having consideration. President Ricks told the council he had been inspired to name John and advocated him very highly, but the council and Brother Christensen did not support him, the latter joining in support of Del Taylor when his nominee received no support. At noon, F. S. Parkinson and J. E. Jensen spoke to me and suggested their choice would be E. S. Stucki who is superintendent of the Rexburg schools. At 2:00 p.m. I suggested to President Ricks we name Brother Stucki and end the discussion. He agreed and I called Brother Stucki. We got his agreement. He is also a member of the High Council. We called the council in session at 4:00 p.m., named E. S. Stucki, and he was unanimously endorsed. Had it not been for the opposition of Oswald Christensen, John would undoubtedly have been nominated and endorsed as bishop.

President Ricks told me he had the inspiration during the week. I had had an inspiration of the same kind more than once but dismissed it from my mind because John was my own son. I am still very happy that he was considered worthy of so exalted a calling.

At 2:00 p.m. the regular stake Priesthood Meeting had been held. President Porter had reported on the "recent conference at Salt Lake City which I attended (I being the only one of the stake presidency to attend this session). At that session I was accompanied by my wife and three youngest daughters [Mary Nell, Ann, and Margaret]. We stayed at the Newhouse Hotel and enjoyed the trip immensely." At the conclusion of the stake meetings, President Porter had set some stake officers apart: "Sister Emily Cook on the Relief Society board; Carl J. Johnson and Sister Leah Nelson on the Sunday School board; and Sister Margaret Ray on the Primary board." The day's meetings included a visit to first ward's sacrament meeting in the evening.

Sunday evening, October 20, 1935, the stake presidency was in the fourth ward to install a new bishopric. The present bishopric was released along with the ward clerk. President Porter noted in his diary that

Ezra Stucki was sustained as bishop with D. G. Taylor and John C. Porter (my son) as counselors. Daniel Ricks was sustained as clerk. Brother Stucki had selected his counselors without any suggestion from members of the stake presidency and presented them at our meeting last evening. We were very pleased with the selections. The people of the ward were very pleased with the selection. The retiring members spoke, also the incoming officers. President Ricks and I each spoke. In my remarks, I thanked the people of the ward for the encouragement they had given John while in the ward and for now accepting and sustaining him in this high position while still so young a man. At the close of the meeting, Brother M. M. Norman, a member of the ward, handed me a paper with the following written on it: "Brother Porter: It seems to me that John's uprightness and faithfulness in our ward has been a source of strength and encouragement to the members of this ward, even to us old members. I have felt this ever since he first joined us. We are blessed to now have him in the bishopric."

April 25, 1936, the Rexburg Stake Presidency and ward bishoprics were in Pocatello to attend a meeting under the direction of Apostle Melvin J. Ballard, a member of the recently organized LDS Church

Welfare Committee. Harold B. Lee, who became managing director of the program, was also in attendance. They explained the new welfare program. Stakes from "Portneuf on the south to Victor on the north and Lost River to the west," would form a relief district to be known, in due time, as the Eastern Idaho Church Welfare Organization. A central storehouse would be established with local storehouses established at the discretion of the stake presidencies. To help fund the Church's welfare program, each Church member was asked to contribute \$1 per year in cash or produce. Under the program, to get Church members off the "dole," each person who needed relief assistance was asked to work on various projects.

Rexburg Stake officers met Sunday, April 26, to make plans to immediately implement the welfare program. President Porter was named chairman of the stake welfare committee and served in that capacity for many years. Porter had a spare room in the back of the building he owned next to his store and welfare goods were stored there.

Monday evening, September 28, 1936, stake presidencies and stake music leaders from Rexburg, Teton, Yellowstone, and Rigby Stakes met at Ricks College to discuss the possibility of "establishing a music course for choristers and organists in these four stakes." They decided on a twelve-week course presented by the McCune School of Music of Salt Lake City. Ricks College music teachers John Anderson and C. C. Clive would instruct the courses. The fee was \$5 for conductors and \$10 for organists with half of each fee to be paid by the Church and half by the ward from which the student came. Anyone else could take the courses if they paid the fee. President Porter was appointed chairman of the four-stake music committee. Vera Browning was appointed secretary. The courses started, under Porter's supervision, on October 12.

Thursday, October 28, 1937, President Porter spoke at the funeral of Clara Ricks, a Rexburg pioneer. "We have lived neighbors to them [Clara and Brigham Ricks] for thirty years and have had no disputes," Porter noted in his diary. "They and their children always respected our rights." President Porter "read the account of the horse thieves staying at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brigham Ricks the night of June 19, 1884, which tells how the house was surrounded and, as the

bandits came out in the morning, one was shot and killed and the other two arrested." Porter concluded his discourse by discussing the "conditions under which this woman and her husband had lived and reared her family of eleven children. We had found them good neighbors." Nelle, accompanied by the choir, sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

The stake presidency was in the fourth ward to reorganize the bishopric on Sunday, October 31, 1937. Bishop Stucki was released. Delbert G. Taylor was sustained as the new bishop. He chose John C. Porter as first counselor. A second counselor was not sustained at the meeting.

President Porter was integrally involved with the welfare program for several years as stresses of the Great Depression faded into stresses of World War II. But Porter's involvement was not just as an administrator. He was often in the stake farm fields. On July 5, 1942, he was one of twelve men who thinned beets on Charles G. Thomason's farm. The stake had a three and one-half acre field there. After the men, most of whom were over sixty years of age, completed four hours of hard work, they relaxed at lunch fixed by the Thomason's.

President Porter continued his pattern of attending General Conference in Salt Lake City twice a year in April and October. He attended the October conference in 1942, but this time all the stake presidency was in attendance along with most of the High Council, bishops, and bishops' counselors of the Rexburg Stake. They were there to attend a special meeting to which only stake presidencies and ward bishoprics had been invited. President David O. McKay, second counselor in the First Presidency, conducted. Instruction was given on a wide range of subjects including the war effort and the welfare program.

President Porter continued to oversee the stake welfare program through 1943, 1944, and most of 1945. He set the example by working in the fields on stake welfare projects. He sermonized often in ward and stake conferences about the war effort and the importance of the welfare program. He often reported stake welfare efforts to the presiding bishopric's office, and he occasionally met with members of the presiding bishopric. He attended meetings of the Eastern Idaho Church

Welfare Organization in various places in eastern Idaho. General Authorities often visited those meetings to give advice and encouragement.

On Monday, September 24, 1945, President Porter joined members of the Rexburg Stake at the 2:00 p.m. dedicatory session of the Idaho Falls Temple. Giving the event added significance was the fact that, for the only time in Idaho's history, all the General Authorities of the Church, headed by President George Albert Smith, were in the state. The Rexburg Stake choir sang "This House We Dedicate to Thee" and "Glorious Things Are Sung of Zion."

Apostles Joseph Fielding Smith and Albert E. Bowen presided at the Rexburg Stake conference held Sunday, October 28, 1945. Elder Smith conducted the business portion of the morning session. He asked the congregation to consider the question: "Should one of the largest stakes in the Church be divided?" The congregation voted in the affirmative. Elder Smith prolonged the suspense somewhat by announcing the division of the stake into the Rexburg Stake and North Rexburg Stake, but new stake officers would not be presented for a sustaining vote until the afternoon session.

The tabernacle was crowded for the afternoon session. Elder Smith had already announced stake boundaries so there was no speculation about President Porter's status. His home ward, the first ward, was in the new stake boundary, and he would be released. The record of the Rexburg Stake notes that "Elder Joseph Fielding Smith proposed that the stake counselors and the High Council of the Rexburg Stake be released and a vote of appreciation and an honorable release was voted them by unanimous vote." President Ricks was retained as president of the Rexburg Stake. He chose John L. Clarke and Charles G. Thomason as counselors. The North Rexburg Stake President was Orval P. Mortensen with Leon Strong and Edwin R. Flamm as counselors. Porter was released, but he was asked to assist in priesthood ordinances. He ordained Grant H. Belnap to the Melchizedek Priesthood and to the office of elder. He also set apart Joseph F. Sellers as a member of the North Rexburg Stake High Council.

Porter had served in the Rexburg Stake Presidency for twenty years. During those years, it was a treat for his family when he visited his

home ward. Mary Nell noted that, when he visited the first ward, "we would make up excuses why we just could not sit on those hard benches, and he would let us go up and sit with him on the stand. That was a big treat because we really thought we were important."

Porter could look back on those twenty years with considerable pride as the stake was always one of the top stakes in the entire Church. He had served with vigor and initiative during the economic and political crises of the 1930s and 1940s. He was sixty-nine years old when he was released. By anyone's standard, he could have been expected to retire from Church service. In fact, he felt like Church authorities were trying to retire him. But such was not in his nature. He spoke at several funerals and at Church services over the next many years. He would be a faithful ward teacher and would devote ten years to teaching the High Priests group in the first ward. He also directed the first ward choir for a year. As near as anyone could tell, he did not even slow down.

5

Businessman

Almost two years after arriving in Rexburg, on April 26, 1904, Porter and his wife Gertrude bought land in lot 2, block 22, of the original townsite plat. They bought the land for \$200 from Ezra and Rosella Christiansen. They used part of the property to secure a "Material Man's Lien" in favor of the Consolidated Wagon & Machine Company. The loan was for \$316.15 and provided money for materials to start building a house. The lien was satisfied and released on September 28. Earlier, on September 1, the Porters used part of the same land to secure a \$600 mortgage with Western Savings and Loan Company of Salt Lake City. They were to make payments of \$10.74 per month for eighty-one months to satisfy the debt. They used the money to continue building the house.

Porter would buy and sell land for many years. He would often use land to secure loans for family and business purposes.

Porter and his brother Frank and their wives bought land in lot 1, block 1, and lots 1 and 4 of block 18 which amounted to three and five-eighths acres. They bought the land from their parents in January 1906. They paid \$300. The parents had obtained the land in 1902 by paying Zeth Thomas of Logan \$125 for it. The land was used to secure

a \$400 mortgage to the Rexburg State Bank in January 1906. The mortgage was paid in full on April 25, 1908.

On May 25, 1907, by Warranty Deed "between Arthur Porter, Jr., widower," and William E. Gee, a corner lot in lot 2, block 22 was conveyed to Gee for the sum of \$1,100. Many years later some legal questions were raised about the property. On September 3, 1936, Gee filed a petition with the probate court of Madison County to have clarified Idaho law in the matter and to secure his interest in the property. F. L. Davis, the probate judge, affirmed that Porter, having absolute right to the property upon the death of Gertrude, could therefore dispose of the land as he wished. Because Idaho is a community property state, Porter succeeded to all rights, title, and interest in the property. Gee was thus satisfied that no claim from the Porter family could be made upon the property.

On Monday, February 10, 1908, Porter and his brother Frank bought the *Current-Journal* newspaper for \$3,000. They had both worked on the paper for several years. Porter was a news writer while Frank was printing plant foreman. Porter assumed managerial duties from O. F. Ursenbach while Frank continued running the printing plant. They hired their brother Clement as an apprentice. Ezra C. Dalby continued for a time as editor. Because Porter was a full-time teacher at the academy, he did most of his work, "writing, typesetting, mechanical work, and job printing," at night. To get working capital, the Porter brothers mortgaged some land to Harrison W. Haines of St. Anthony to secure a promissory note of \$200. The note was for two years, falling due on June 18, 1910, at twelve percent interest per annum. The note would be extended for two years and was paid in full August 8, 1912.

The first edition of the *Current-Journal* under new ownership carried the very interesting story of the shooting of Charles W. Edwards by Eli A. Larkin. The shooting had taken place in Arthur H. Woodvine's barber shop on Saturday, February 8, 1908. Edwards died. Larkin was arrested after being pursued north of town to the Darby ranch where he was caught hiding in a haystack. Larkin was indicted for murder but found innocent by a jury of his peers and set free. The defense had convinced the jury that Larkin had done the community a service by killing Edwards who was a saloon owner of "vicious character."

Early in August 1909, Porter was approached by J. M. Cook, chairman of the city council printing committee, about submitting a bid to do the city printing. Porter was asked to put his bid in writing. Porter realized he would be competing with W. Lloyd Adams' *Rexburg Standard*. The *Standard* had printed city ordinances and business for ten cents a line. Porter bid five cents a line. Porter had heard rumors that asking him to bid was just a formality, that the *Standard* was going to get the business regardless. Porter confronted each member of the printing committee, which included besides Cook, Henry Flamm and Willard Johnson, about the rumors. He was assured that his bid would be fairly considered. Porter's bid was submitted in mid-August but no bid had been submitted by Adams so the council had not acted on the matter.

Porter appeared at the council meeting on September 22. Adams was also in attendance. Porter wanted to know why his bid had not been accepted. Cook said he favored Porter because of his five cents per line bid. Flamm and Johnson countered that Adams had made a similar verbal bid to them. Cook said that, if they were going to ignore the rules of the committee for a written bid, he was going to resign from the committee. Flamm and Johnson stated that the reason they would accept Adams' five cents per line rather than Porter's was because Adams used smaller print and would therefore cost less. Porter complained that he had been deceived. Despite Cook's threat to resign and Porter's obvious mistreatment, Flamm moved, Johnson seconded, that the *Standard* be awarded the bid for the city's printing. Cook objected but the motion carried. Porter lost that one, but he had served notice that he would be a competitor in the newspaper business.

Porter and W. Lloyd Adams would be newspaper and political competitors for many years yet they remained friends with a high regard for each other. They almost always supported each other in community affairs. The men served together in several civic ventures. At one time, 1912, the two of them leased the Flamm Opera House for a year and put on a variety of programs. Occasionally, when printing machines of one or the other broke down, they aided each other to get out rival newspapers. On some issues they took opposite views editorially. By reading the editorials, one would get an image of bitter rivals judging from the abusive language used to portray each other's views. But that

was part and parcel of an early twentieth century newspaperman's trade. They enjoyed the verbal sparring and so did their contemporaries who understood that they were friends. Years later in January 1933, when Adams received his law degree, Porter was among the first to publicly praise the achievement — "We congratulate our fellow craftsman for his ambition and achievement. Furthermore," Porter quipped, "we maintain that anyone who can succeed in the newspaper business (as Lloyd has done) is equipped with an experience by which he can attain practically any ambition that he sets his mind to."

Porter's is among the biographies printed in volume III of Hiram T. French's *History of Idaho* published in 1914. "In no avenue of business do men become so widely known as in journalism," notes the history, "not always as personalities, but as influences, their printed thoughts speaking to thousands where their spoken ones could reach perhaps but a score. Hence, the grave responsibility of the journalist; the power of the press has many times brought reformatory legislation and more than once has changed public policies." The biography concluded that Porter was "naturally endowed with editorial ability and has made his publication an active agent for public enlightenment."

In June 1910, Porter bought land in lot 3, block 35, for \$2,400 from George E. and Rose L. Hyde. The land was "subject to a mortgage of \$1,250 to the Western Loan and Savings Company." The parcel of land, along with other parcels, would be used to secure funds as soon as one mortgage was paid off, for the next many years.

On November 28, 1913, Porter paid his brother Frank \$200 for his share of lots 1 and 4 in block 18 and lot 1 in block 1. Porter now had exclusive rights to the property. He used the property to secure a \$700 loan from the St. Anthony Building and Manufacturing Company, Limited. Frank moved to Downey, Idaho, to publish a newspaper, then later to Salt Lake City.

In June 1915, Porter announced that the "*Current-Journal* has recently installed a Boston stitcher, Rossback perforator, and Portland punch, all up-to-date machines especially for book and job work. We have also put in some new type. We guarantee good work and prices as low as the work can be done. See us before giving your work to a transient agent. We do the same quality of work at home and generally at a lower figure. Patronize the home producer — he and his employees

spend their money here." His belief in patronizing local businesses was part of his creed and was drummed into all his children all their lives. They were never permitted to "go shopping in Idaho Falls" as friends sometimes did as they were taught to support the Rexburg commerce.

By February 1922, the *Current-Journal* name had been changed to *Rexburg Journal* and was being published as a seven-column paper rather than the previous six columns. Porter announced "additional news features for the enlarged paper."

Early in 1916, to raise some capital to buy a larger building to house the *Journal*, Porter and Nelle sold lot 4 of block 18 to Arthur Porter, Sr., for \$650 and two acres in lot 1, block 1, to Brigham Ricks for \$150. The property sold to Ricks bordered part of the Rexburg canal. Additionally, they mortgaged other land to the National Park Lumber Company of St. Anthony for a \$1,092 loan at twelve percent per annum.

Porter wrote that he "first bought a location on Main Street next to the W. O. W. [Woodmen of the World] building." He was not at that location very long. For some months, he, along with Hyrum Ricks, Jr., John L. Ballif, Jr., and others had been promoting opening a business street from Main Street to the academy. This was accomplished in mid 1916. "Hyrum, leading promoter and real estate dealer," wrote Porter, "induced me to locate on the new street and sold me a location," which Porter later sold to Al Brian who built a pool hall thereon. A group of entrepreneurs, including Porter, formed the Rexburg Building and Loan Company — which would be formally incorporated in 1920 — and built a first-rate hotel on College Avenue. They leased it to Marriner Eccles of Logan in 1917 who operated the facility as the Eccles Hotel. The lease was for ten years. Porter served as president of the hotel company and transacted business pertaining thereto from his *Journal* office.

On July 14, 1916, Porter and eight other men incorporated the "Rexburg Investment Company, Limited." The purpose of the company was "to purchase, hold, sell, improve, and lease real estate and mortgage and encumber the same, and to erect, manage, care for, and maintain, extend and alter buildings thereon." The company was to sell \$50,000 in capital stock with each share worth \$100. Twenty-one thousand dollars was initially subscribed with Porter buying fifty shares

at a par value of \$5,000. The capital stock was increased to \$100,000 in March 1919.

Porter and thirteen other men incorporated the "Rexburg Building and Construction Company, Limited" on September 6, 1917. Over \$27,000 was initially subscribed. Porter bought only two shares, each for \$100. A little over two months later, November 20, 1917, Porter was one of the incorporators of "Rexburg Home Builders, Limited." He purchased four shares at \$50 each. Both of the 1917 corporations were established to do much the same things as the Rexburg Investment Company, Limited.

In July 1916, Porter announced that the *Journal* "has the agency for selling Church publications in this locality. Leave orders at the office." As an adjunct to his publishing business, Porter bought Squires Book Store from Conley Squires in 1916. He renamed the store Porter's Book Store and Gift Shop, sometimes called "Rexburg Journal Book Store." Porter demonstrated his optimism about the financial stability of Rexburg by expanding his business into retail selling of a variety of merchandise. He was no longer a full-time teacher at the academy, so he could devote his full time to his business enterprises. By 1920, Porter's Book Store was one of the five largest outlets for LDS Church books outside of Salt Lake City. Indeed, in addition to LDS Church books, it carried one of the largest stocks of books of any book store in Idaho.

Porter's children, mostly Warren and the girls, often worked in the book store. They recall how their father enjoyed the store, partly because he enjoyed reading the books. Porter kept the store open long hours. He even reopened it after hours at a patron's knock. This annoyed the children who wanted to go home. On Christmas Eve, the store remained open until midnight. From his office in the rear of the store and at the entrance to the newspaper office (the office served as office to both enterprises), Porter could look through an opening in the wall to see what was happening in the book store. If there seemed to be a lot of customers waiting to be served, he would call people working in the print shop at the rear of the building to go to the front and help out in the book store. Warren enjoyed working in the store, and, as he grew up, recalled several trips to Salt Lake City with his father to buy merchandise.

In November 1917, Porter and Nelle sold land in lot 3, block 35, to Alfred E. Carlson for \$3,500. Carlson assumed a \$1,600 mortgage against the property held by Beneficial Life Insurance Company of Salt Lake City.

On January 18, 1918, Porter, from his new office on College Avenue, announced the installation of a "new Model 19 linotype" machine. "This is the latest make of typesetting machine," he explained, "and is a big asset to our plant which we are putting into the most up-to-date condition. We are installing only the most modern machinery and will be prepared to give the most efficient service." The machine was installed under the direction of T. P. McAndries and N. C. Petersen of the Mergenthaler Company. They also provided operating instructions. "It is our aim to always maintain a service adequate to the needs of our rapidly growing city," concluded Porter, "and in advance of the times." The old Prouty Press was relegated to the basement. There it remained until it was donated to a World War II scrap metal drive.

Early in July 1919, construction was commenced on the Madison County Courthouse. Charles Zollinger was awarded the bid at \$74,346.35. R. G. Herdti, another local young man, was awarded the electrical contract. "It is a pleasure to record that Rexburg has young men of enterprise and capacity," complimented Porter, "to carry on the building of this magnificent commonwealth that was so well commenced by our pioneers." Zollinger and Porter would be friends for their lifetimes although Zollinger was a noted Republican and Porter just as noted a Democrat. Zollinger paid Porter the highest compliment he possibly could: "The only time I remember voting for a Democrat, he was defeated along with the Republicans I voted for," he wrote in his autobiography. "Arthur Porter was the Democrat I voted for." The compliment was tempered with the acknowledgement by Zollinger that "I never made that mistake again."

Late in 1919, Porter gave a Deed of Right of Way to the city for a sewer line to be built through his property in lot 3, block 35. Porter received the legal payment of \$1 to complete the transaction. Early in December, Porter appeared before the county commission to seek a "refund and cancellation of tax on \$150 improvements on lot 3, block 35." Porter presented receipts to support his claim that he had been

billed twice and the bill had been paid each time before he noticed he had been "erroneously assessed" the second time. "The claim was granted and refund ordered."

On January 15, 1920, Articles of Incorporation of Rexburg Building and Loan Company were duly filed with Madison County under the laws of the state of Idaho. Briefly stated, the corporation was developed to buy and sell real estate, build buildings for sale or lease, lend money secured by real estate, and raise money by several methods secured by real estate. The corporation was set up for a fifty-year period with seven directors. The capital stock was to be \$1 million "divided into one hundred thousand shares of the par value of ten (\$10) dollars each." The amount of capital stock actually subscribed at the time of filing was \$56,000. Fifty-four men and two women had purchased for \$1,000 each one hundred shares. The list is a "Who's Who" of Rexburg society in 1920. Hoping to sell \$1 million in capital stock proved to be overly optimistic. The board of directors of the company met on October 16, 1922, "for the purpose of diminishing the capital stock of said corporation from \$1 million dollars to \$160 thousand dollars and amending the articles of incorporation of said company accordingly." The capital stock was to be "divided into sixteen hundred shares of common stock of the par value of \$10 each." The "principal business of said corporation is located" in the office of the *Rexburg Journal*. Besides the Eccles Hotel, the company built several of the brick houses on Second South, east of Ricks College.

The economic situation in Rexburg deteriorated during the 1920s. The Eccles Hotel did not produce enough revenue to satisfy Marriner Eccles so he did not renew his lease at expiration in 1927. As of September 1, 1927, the hotel came under the management of Rexburg Building and Loan Company of which Porter was president and was to be known as the Idamont Hotel. The company had purchased furniture and equipment from Eccles. D. J. Clark was appointed manager. The post office and Western Union Telegraph Company still leased space in the building. "The building and equipment represent a value of \$175,000," observed the *Rexburg Journal*. "Within a year or so after the building was erected, the depression in business came, causing a number of other former stockholders to drop their stock when assessments had to be made to meet obligations on the building

and losses brought on by the depression in business. These difficulties have been overcome, and the outlook for the company is bright for conducting a successful and profitable business."

On February 6, 1928, Porter and others incorporated the "Idamont Hotel Company." The company was capitalized at \$60,000 "divided into six thousand shares at par value of ten dollars each." Only \$27,710 was actually subscribed of which Porter owned 334 shares worth \$3,340. Only attracting enough investors to buy a little over one-third of the stock would indicate that the outlook for the company was not very bright.

Early in January 1928, Porter and Nelle used land in lot 1, block 38, to secure a loan of \$8,000 with United States Building and Loan Association of Butte, Montana. Interest was at eight percent per annum with payments of \$97.06 per month for one hundred twenty months. Not only was the loan secured by land, but also by eighty shares owned by Porter of the capital stock of the United States Building and Loan Association. Subsequent to granting the loan, the USB&L Association was converted to the Prudential Federal Savings and Loan Association on November 22, 1937. The Porters finished paying the note to that company and the mortgage was released on November 27, 1948.

Friday, April 20, 1928, was Porter's fifty-second birthday. "I put in a long day at the office as we published the *Journal* after midnight and mailed it — ten pages," he wrote in his diary. "We are very busy in the office. I have the following employed: Emrys Williams, foreman; son John; daughter Louise; and LaSalle Roylance in printing office; Nellie, sister; Marie Smith in the store; Phyllis Krogue [secretary] in my office; and George E. Liljenquist, bookkeeper. Am in vigorous health," he concluded, "and eager to work and promote my business, both the newspaper and printing office and book store."

The week commencing Sunday, July 29, 1928, was an especially busy one for Porter. He attended the quarterly banquet of the Chamber of Commerce held in the new dining room of the Idamont Hotel. The main speaker was M. B. Yeaman of Idaho Falls. "He gave a good talk on taxes, advocating a state income tax with which," noted Porter, "I agree." The new dining room was quite an attraction, and the food was superb. The dining room had only been open for a few days. Early in 1928, the directors of the hotel declared their intention to "give a

service in accordance with the standards of first class hotels along the Yellowstone and other scenic highways. They intend to cater particularly to local trade and invite the public to take meals here. Sunday dinners will be a special feature." They hired Mary Cartier to "superintend the cuisine and dining room."

On Thursday, August 2, Porter attended a meeting of directors of the Idamont Hotel Company of which he was president. The directors decided to levy a "five percent assessment to raise money to pay for recent improvements," including the dining room. In addition to everything else Porter did during the week, he "made several trips to school districts collecting accounts." Also, he "met a number of salesmen and placed orders for merchandise." Seemingly "every minute of every day is filled with some activity."

By 1929, the expansion of the Idamont Hotel to accommodate a dining room did not seem like such a good idea after all. On May 6, the directors met, with Porter conducting, and decided to assess fifty cents per share on the capital stock of the corporation. The money was payable no later than June 8, 1929. Any unpaid assessment after June 8 would necessitate that stock being declared "delinquent and advertised for sale at public auction and, unless payment is made before, will be sold on the 8th day of July, 1929, to pay the delinquent assessment together with the costs of advertising and expense of sale." Some of the stock was declared delinquent and offered for sale, but no one had any money to buy it.

The company began to feel the crunch of the financial depression that was sweeping the nation. By mid 1930, the company obviously could not continue to operate the hotel. The Rexburg Building & Loan Company liquidated assets to pay debts. Porter, Hyrum I. Poole, Hugh A. Wright, George A. Huskinson, David J. Clarke, and M. C. Rigby were appointed trustees for the liquidation. The company had not been able to comply with the provisions of a Bond for Deed executed January 14, 1920, between Mark C. and Carrie Madison and the company. The provisions were that, for land on which the hotel had been built, the Madisons would receive \$3,000 the day the deed was signed (which they did), \$4,000 on or before five months from the date, and a final \$2,500 on or before ten months after the date. The Madisons had not called in the debt although it was almost ten years

past due. Probably the fact that Carrie was a stockholder in the company had something to do with it. But, the company was in default, and the property reverted back to the Madisons for the sum of \$1. A Boise firm held the mortgage on the building so they took it over. Porter took the situation philosophically. There were a "lot of people who lost money in building that hotel, he said," recalled John, "but after it is all said and done, the building is there and the hotel is there, and the town has it."

Porter and other surviving members of the "last board of directors of Rexburg Building & Loan Company, a defunct corporation," deeded, in September, 1936, to Emma Smith Ballif and John L. Ballif, Sr., for the sum of \$1, a small piece of ground in lot 4, block 39. "This deed is given to remove a cloud upon the title of said grantees."

The Porters had to do some retrenching themselves to keep some financial security in the early 1930s. Porter was worried he would lose the building in which he operated the newspaper and book store. He hauled a considerable amount of merchandise home and stored it. In case he lost the building, he at least would still have his merchandise. To get out from under a mortgage, the Porters sold land on May 27, 1931, in lot 3, block 35, to Beneficial Life Insurance Company for the sum of \$10. Again, on December 18, 1933, by special Warranty Deed and for the sum of \$1, they deeded land in lot 1, block 38, to the United States Building and Loan Association of Butte, Montana. The Porters had signed an \$8,000 promissory note granted by the company on January 3, 1928. On April 2, 1929, the Porters used the land to secure the remainder of the note. They were evidently unable to keep up the payments and deeded the land to the company to satisfy the remainder of the note.

On June 25, 1932, the directors, Arthur Porter, Jr., Nelle Porter, Mrs. A. W. Child (mother-in-law), and Nellie Porter (sister), of the newly organized Rexburg Sales Company met and adopted two resolutions:

Resolved: That Arthur Porter, the general manager of the company, be and he is hereby authorized, to open a bank account in the name of the company, to sign all checks, pay the obligations of the company, incur obligations, sign notes, employ and discharge help, manage, operate, and conduct the business of the company in every respect.

Resolved: That Arthur Porter as general manager of the company shall receive the sum of \$90 per month and the secretary/treasurer shall receive the sum of \$15 per month.

Porter opened the account with the Rexburg State Bank. His sister Nellie Porter was elected secretary/treasurer. Another meeting was held July 12, 1932. Two more resolutions were unanimously adopted that clarified dispersion of one hundred shares of stock:

Resolved: that Arthur Porter be and he is hereby awarded and allotted eighty-five shares of stock in the company and the sum of \$600 in cash as consideration for the transfer to the company of the business, stock, and equities and accounts receivable of Porter's Book Store and Mrs. Nelle C. Porter, Mrs. A. W. Child, and Nellie Porter, respectively, are allotted five shares of stock each for the sum of \$2 each.

Resolved, that the offer of Arthur Porter to sell and transfer by bill of sale the stock and merchandise of Porter's Book Store to the Rexburg Sales Company as payment for eighty-five shares of stock in the company is hereby accepted and the president and secretary are hereby authorized to issue said stock in full payment of the said stock of goods of Porter's Book Store, inventoried at \$2,654.

The company was officially incorporated on February 9, 1933, with the only change being that each share of stock was worth \$10 each rather than \$2.

The newspaper kept afloat during the 1930s although Porter had to be innovative to keep the public interested and buying. He initiated his Christmas 1934 subscription selling campaign by offering gifts to those who bought a subscription or renewed their subscription for 1935. They had a choice between a 1935 desk calendar with their picture (the picture to be taken and developed by Anderson Studio) or they could choose a book from the book store that retailed for seventy-five cents or less. Furthermore, if a person wished to give a *Rexburg Journal* subscription for a Christmas present, he could claim one of the gifts for each gift subscription. The incentives created considerable interest, and many subscriptions were sold.

In February 1936, the *Rexburg Journal* began being published on Thursdays rather than Fridays. Among other reasons for the day change was that advertisers could advertise weekend specials and have them noticed by a larger number of people. When the paper was

published on Fridays, in-town patrons would usually get the paper late that day, but those who relied on having their paper mailed, often got it on Monday or later. Now they got the paper by Saturday and could patronize local merchants for advertised specials.

Early in August 1936, Porter developed a unique plan to increase subscriptions to the *Rexburg Journal*. Six, four, or three month scholarships to Ricks College, LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, or the Pocatello School of Beauty Culture would be offered to those who could sell subscriptions to the paper. Also a cash commission would be given, so money in hand was a possibility. Votes would be accumulated for each new or renewal subscription sold and would count toward the nine scholarships. The top nine would be awarded a scholarship to the school of their choice. The commission was ten percent; the cost of the paper for one year was \$1.50. Subscriptions could be purchased for one, two, or three years. The campaign opened on August 7 and would conclude September 21.

Scholarships were awarded to nine girls out of the eleven who vied for the scholarships. No boys entered the contest. The *Rexburg Journal* "now has a bona fide list of paid subscribers that covers the Rexburg trade territory like a blanket," noted Porter, "the kind of coverage that does the advertisers the most good. The paper now has county-wide circulation which exceeds anything in the history of the paper and which is gratifying to the management."

By late 1937, the business economic picture was somewhat better as new deal legislation had had some effect. On Thursday, October 28, Porter wrote in his diary that "this is 'Press Day,' always a busy day. We issue and mail the *Rexburg Journal*. We have a page [ad] from the ZCMI, which store is closing out, that is, the Rexburg store. The *Standard*, our competitor, has the same page and also a page from McCrackens. In this they scored slightly over us. Had a good day in the store." Porter also wrote that "we are building an addition to our business property, the south building. The contract is for approximately \$1,250. It will reach \$1,500 or more." (Porter had purchased the building adjacent to and south of the book store.)

In January 1942, son John C. Porter bought the *Rexburg Standard* from Burton L. Moore who had purchased that newspaper in 1938 from W. Lloyd Adams. The Porter family now owned both of the city's

newspapers. This created some problems in competing for advertising although the *Standard* was published on Tuesdays. Son Arthur C. Porter bought the *Journal* from his father in 1947. Later, John and Arthur would divide the newspaper and job printing businesses with John combining the *Standard* and the *Journal* into one paper and Arthur taking the job printing part of the business.

In 1949, Porter sold the book store to son Warren. Although Porter continued to work at both the newspaper office and the expanded book and variety store for some time, he was essentially retired from administering business interests. He did continue to buy and sell land during the late 1940s, the 1950s, and almost until his death in December 1967. But most of the transactions were intrafamilial.

In a short history which he wrote in 1961 for his book of remembrance, he sums up his teaching and business vocations as follows:

I taught school for twenty years: first year at Lewiston, Utah 1899-1900; next two years at Oneida Stake Academy, Preston, Idaho. At Ricks Academy (later Ricks College) at Rexburg, Idaho, seventeen years, 1902 to 1919. Took up a farm at Ora, Idaho, 1903, and worked in summer. Purchased ten acres in Rexburg, site of present George Garner gravel pit, 1902, and raised beets and potatoes and wheat.

I purchased the *Current-Journal* (later the *Rexburg Journal*) in 1908 for \$3,000 (on tick) which I published for the next thirty-nine years. Founded Porter's Book Store in 1916 which I managed and built up until 1949. Other enterprises in which I participated in the above or since: in 1901 in Preston joined two other men in a partnership that purchased the *Preston Standard* which we published for a year. I was the business manager. In 1912, in partnership with Lloyd Adams, leased the Flamm Opera House for a year and put on a varied program. Worked as carpenter on the Ricks Academy administration building, also as assistant to architect C. M. Squires. Joined Hyrum Ricks, Jr., and others in a promotion and building company that opened and paved College Avenue, built the Idamont Hotel, commercial block, and other business and residence buildings. I was president of the hotel company for about ten years.

I was secretary of the Fremont County Fair from 1911 to 1921. I was county superintendent of Madison Schools from 1949 to 1953. I have been secretary of the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce from 1949 to present. I was mayor of Rexburg three terms, 1929 to 1935 (during the depression). Bought and remodeled present home [205 East Main Street] in 1909. Also

built two other houses — now owned and occupied by Noal Henderson and Russel Flamm. Worked Eccles Sawmill, Baker City, Oregon, summer of 1900.

Porter's newspaper and book store survived by careful management through difficult times. Each of his children learned to work in the print shop and store. They were taught to work well and to earn their money. Careful management was a hallmark of his personality in business as well as other facets of his life. Porter now could turn full attention to a multiplicity of other duties including serving on jury duty in 1949 and being chosen as a juror but not called to duty in 1951, 1952, and 1953.



Nellie Porter (sister) and John Porter mailing newspapers



Nelle Child Porter circa 1903

6

Commercial Club Chamber of Commerce & Rotary Club

The Rexburg Commercial Club was organized January 29, 1906, and was soon a unifying factor in the community. Porter was involved with the club from the beginning. He was one of forty-four charter members, paying \$25 for the privilege. Later, members were admitted for a \$5 fee. Everyone paid dues of \$1 per month.

The first big undertaking of the club was to vigorously work to get the Fremont County seat moved from St. Anthony to Rexburg. Although the necessary votes were not cast in favor of the proposition, the club had served notice that Rexburg's interests would be promoted. In 1909, the club led the way in developing and funding plans for a modern railroad depot in the city. In 1911, the club helped plan and fund the Fremont Stake tabernacle.

On Wednesday, May 25, 1911, officers of the club directed that Rexburg needed to be widely advertised as a pleasant town with all the amenities anyone could need to live and raise a family comfortably. Porter, who was a member of the club's advertising committee, was given the direct responsibility to see that each week some material touting Rexburg was sent to newspapers "in centers where it would be effective." The other members of the advertising committee were

Chairman W. Lloyd Adams, Ross J. Comstock, and Thomas E. Bassett.

Porter and several prominent men of the club pledged themselves to underwrite the expenses of bringing prominent programs to Rexburg such as chautauqua. Tickets to the programs would be sold and all profits would go to a fund to be used for a Carnegie library.

In 1912, Porter was again appointed to the advertising committee. The major thrust that year was to get some action on a Rexburg to Sugar City road. In time, this project succeeded.

A special election was held on November 4, 1913, for the citizenry to vote on establishing a new county. The enabling legislation had been passed by the Idaho Legislature in February 1913 to establish Madison County if the people voted in favor. The vote was 1,757 in favor, 748 opposed. Also on the ballot was whether Rexburg or Sugar City should be the county seat if a new county was organized. Rexburg won by a vote of 1,732 to 187 for Sugar City. The Rexburg Commercial Club had been especially active for several years in promoting the new county. Porter had served on the "Madison County Committee" as a member of the "executive committee" with W. Lloyd Adams, chairman, Mark Austin, Nathan Ricks, Ross J. Comstock, Henry J. Flamm, and R. S. Hunt. Their work was well done. The new county was their reward.

The club's next major project was early in 1916 when they went on record supporting building a road from Main Street to the academy. At the annual meeting on March 13, to add a little impetus to the project, a very effective committee consisting of Porter, R. S. Hunt, Fred S. Parkinson, Timothy J. Winter, and James R. Wright was appointed. The road was constructed and named College Avenue. The club also pledged to help develop the property along the avenue.

The club was especially active in promoting good streets in town and good roads leading to town. Again they had some success. Then World War I diverted attention from roads to the war effort. Many members of the club, including Porter, were directly involved in promoting the war effort on the home front. The club was the first organization in the city to call for a parade to show support for the call by President Woodrow Wilson and Governor Moses Alexander to prepare for war. A committee on patriotism was added to the club's list

of committees. Club meetings were still held during the war months, but the usual business had to do with the war effort. For example, on February 4, 1918, the club voted to aid the local chapter of the Red Cross with a \$20 per month donation. When "Johnny came marching home," the club took the lead in welcoming activities and in trying to find employment for veterans and in assimilating them back into the community.

The club meeting October 20, 1919, dealt primarily with the problem "of investing in stocks sold here by transients." Several club members, including Porter, spoke vigorously against buying stock in unfamiliar businesses or schemes. The censorship committee of the club had been effective in discouraging fraud, but not all sought their advice and some had lost money. Members of the club decided to give full support to the censorship committee and not buy any stock without the approval of the committee. Porter chaired the committee which included William E. Gee and Willard Johnson. Porter took his responsibility very seriously and wrote that he "was ruthless in interviewing and denouncing promoters and transient schemers."

The club continued to promote local improvement and projects. In July 1925, the club, along with the Rotary Club, sponsored the Rexburg Junior Band to encourage boys to develop musical talents.

The club met on Wednesday, July 29, 1925, and appointed an "executive committee to supervise the holding of a grand pageant as indicative of the prosperity that is now dawning upon this section of our country." Porter was one of seven appointed. The club decided that September 16 should be declared "Prosperity Day" and the committee was charged to draw up plans for the day. "It is the ardent desire of the club that all sectional and factional prejudices be forever buried and that all will unite in making this day the most impressive in our history in expression of our appreciation of the grand country we occupy," declared a spokesman for the club (undoubtedly Porter). Club members "are earnest and sincere in their desire to bring about a general feeling of 'Good Will and Get Together' among all our people in this Upper Snake River Valley. Our interests are mutual and similar and any move tending to draw us apart is suicidal." Furthermore, the "club feels that a greater tolerance for the honest opinions of all should be encouraged and cherishes the old adage that 'the Great Ruler of the universe is no

respector of persons' and that we have no right to accord to ourselves the liberty to feel otherwise."

On March 8, 1926, the Commercial Club valedictory was pronounced. After twenty years of community service, the club was officially disbanded. But at the same meeting, the inaugural of the Chamber of Commerce took place with ninety-five men pledging membership. The name had changed but the chamber continued serving the community in much the same fashion as had the Commercial Club and, for the most part, with the same men. For some time the local newspapers continued to report on the activities of the Commercial Club when they meant the Chamber of Commerce.

On January 26, 1927, the chamber met at the courthouse for its annual meeting and election of officers. Porter was elected to serve as a director along with seven others.

The chamber's board of directors met in a special meeting on February 25. Some community merchants had requested some attention to problems attendant to retail merchandising. Porter, Stanley Anderson, and C. Stewart Mason were appointed to address the subject and make recommendations. Porter, especially, could bring years of experience to the subject.

In January 1928, the annual meeting and election was held. Porter's term on the board of directors had expired, and he was not re-elected. He did continue as an active chamber member.

In 1929, the chamber began to actively expand support of projects outside the city. Porter was appointed to the county committee which suggested projects which would be beneficial to the county and supervised development of those projects.

In May 1930, as the chamber prepared for "Whoopee Days," July 2-4, Porter was appointed to chair the "Distinguished Guests and Speakers Committee." He served well and would be involved with several subsequent Whoopee Days in several capacities.

The chamber took a leading role in promoting patriotism during World War II. Under the auspices of the chamber, enlistees and draftees were feted and encouraged.

Early in 1944, Porter was appointed to the legislative committee. This was one of the permanent committees of the chamber and was to keep track of legislation that affected cities.

In 1949, several Chambers of Commerce of the Upper Snake River Valley discussed merits of an area-wide organization. In mid-February 1950, representatives of several chambers met in Idaho Falls with Idaho's congressional delegation to discuss the feasibility of such an organization and were encouraged to develop it. On Monday night, February 27, at a meeting in Rexburg, the Upper Snake River Valley Chamber of Commerce was organized. The purpose was to "promote the agricultural, industrial, tourist, and business interests of the area." Porter attended the meeting along with Al Peterslie, president of the Rexburg Chamber, Karl Klingler, Henry Shirley, and J. M. Parkinson. Representatives from Ashton, Rigby, Hamer, Ririe, and Idaho Falls were also in attendance. Porter was selected to be the temporary secretary. On March 13, the organization was completed. Willard Burton of St. Anthony was elected president. The board of directors was composed of four representatives from each county appointed by the county chambers. Representing Madison County and Rexburg were Porter, R. A. Archer, Ralph Peterson, and Grover Hemming.

In 1949, Porter was appointed chamber secretary and treasurer. He was reappointed yearly through 1963. He thus became spokesman for the chamber and was often quoted on various subjects. He also was the stabilizing member of the chamber because of his tenure in the position.

In 1955, the chamber opposed the post office department's proposal to stop sending mail into the Upper Snake River Valley by train and truck it instead. Post office officials met with the chamber to explain their proposal. "Despite the explanation of the post office department," Porter stated, "we do not feel that service can be so greatly improved nor enough savings made to justify the loss of passenger train service here. It is the consensus of the group that train service would definitely be curtailed or stopped if the mail contract is lost." A campaign was begun to get chambers from the upper valley to complain to postal officials and to seek aid from Idaho's congressional delegation in Washington. That campaign worked for a while, but the mail was soon moved entirely by truck, and, as predicted, passenger service was stopped.

Porter's financial statement for the 1954 fiscal year indicated that \$3,910.54 had been spent by the chamber to "promote the area,

sponsor civic and community activities, and conduct the business of the organization." Porter "stated that the Chamber of Commerce's budget for 1955 calls for even more activities in the interest of this community, and he called upon all businessmen in Rexburg to join the Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to promote and improve the city and community."

On January 17, 1955, when he was seventy-eight years of age, Porter reminisced about his "Experiences with Human Nature":

I am presently employed as secretary of the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce (at \$25 per month), and one of my duties is to collect the dues we assess to everyone doing business in Rexburg. Most businessmen pay by mail in response to my "persuasive" letter. I spent this morning calling on several who had failed to respond.

I first called on W in the bulk oil business. Evidently he was not pleased to see me and kept on writing in his account book while I talked. He did stop long enough to complain about the number of donations he was called on for. I promptly explained that this was not a donation but was his share of the expense of the public service, just as important to him as keeping a path open to his office. I assured him he was getting value received and was telling him of all the services rendered in his behalf by the Chamber of Commerce when he tired of hearing me. He got up and told me he was busy. He fished out a \$10 bill and gave me, to get rid of me. (His assessment was \$15.)

I went next to the laundry. G, the manager, is a nice fellow — willing but never has a dollar. I suggested he give \$5 as I knew he had had a lot of expense building. He promised to hand it to me by the weekend. He seems to have a lot of work, but he doesn't get paid enough for his product. It's a tough life. I hate to take money from a man running a small laundry with his wife helping him.

Next I went to a service operated by B. He was away and the helper could do nothing about it. B is a type that promises and doesn't pay. The only successful way to get his assessment is to get one of his big customers to go with me as a committee.

Next I called on B, the restaurant man. I already knew he wouldn't pay but the president had talked with him and thought he had mellowed. I called and got him alone in the kitchen and told my mission. He said, "Nothing doing as long as the Chamber of Commerce is run the way it is." I asked for suggestions as to how it should be run. "There should be no celebration on July 4th. The money spent on that was wasted. The Santa Claus visit at Christmas was handled badly." He had told them how to do it but no one paid attention. We tried to get approval for effort but to no avail. I was glad to get out into the air before losing control of my temper.

I next met A of the pool hall and asked about his assessment. "No. Absolutely, no." We were killing his business. "No income from slot machines or gambling — both innocent pastimes." He wanted to talk longer but I said I had had all I could take and excused myself.

I next called on D, the barber. This was a pleasant surprise. He not only promptly wrote a check, but spoke pleasantly and encouragingly. I got a renewal of courage from this pleasant visit and decided to call on B the photographer — a disagreeable task.

In our conversation, I reminded him [the photographer] he had not paid the year before although he had promised. He thereupon decided to pay what he had promised but would not pay this year. He was mad because I had not issued him a membership card on his promise to pay. I explained the card is only issued to paid members as a receipt.

I was glad it was now noon and I could quit. I had collected \$34. I attended a meeting of the board of directors at noon and at 2:00 p.m. went to the store (toy department) for my regular afternoon shift.

Porter's ongoing position as chamber secretary during the 1950s placed him in a position of being aware of and promoting opposition to the proposed move of Ricks College to Idaho Falls. This controversy would last through most of the 1950s and into 1961. Being chamber secretary at this most crucial juncture took a lot of time and energy. But, typically, Porter in 1957 at age eighty-one would write that "I enjoy it."

At the January 15, 1964, meeting of the chamber board of directors, Porter gave the financial report showing some \$1,600 in the bank at the end of 1963 with all bills paid. He then asked to be released from his position as secretary/treasurer of the chamber. He was then eighty-seven years old. His request was honored. John L. Clarke, president of Ricks College and Porter's close friend, made a motion that the chamber officers "give Mr. Porter a great vote of thanks for his long and fine job." The vote of thanks received unanimous confirmation.

While Porter was serving the community as a member of the chamber, he was also a member of the Rotary Club, another service organization. The Rexburg Rotary Club had been organized in 1920. Although Porter was not a charter member, he is listed as the forty-eighth member to join. He was involved with the club by 1922. He was elected to the board of directors in April 1925. When the board met to choose their officers, he was elected second vice-president. The

December 29, 1927, issue of the *Rotary Magneto* lists Porter as having attended twenty-two of twenty-five meetings during the year for eighty-eight percent.

Porter served on various committees each year in Rotary and on the board of directors a few times. He never served as president of the club.

The *Rotary Magneto*, October 18, 1928, noted that "this week's program will be rather unique in that it will be given entirely by the Porter family as follows: saxophone and violin duet - John and Louise Porter with piano accompaniment by Charlotta Widsteen; address - Arthur Porter; vocal solo - Mrs. Arthur Porter." The next week the *Magneto* complimented Porter and his family, "We will agree that last week's program was an exceptionally good one. We extend our thanks to Arthur Porter and family for entertaining us and to Miss Charlotta Widsteen who furnished the accompaniment for the musical numbers."

After the November election in 1928, the *Magneto* carried this facetious note: "The election is over and we expect to see Arthur back on the job since they won't let him have the state's money. We expect to see more of Lloyd [Adams] too, since he has been successful in keeping Arthur from getting the money." Porter had been talked into running for state treasurer on the Democratic ticket against Byron Defenbach, the Republican candidate. Porter knew that his was a token nomination to fill the ticket, and there was a notable lack of enthusiasm on his part during the campaign. His son Arthur recalled printing posters and "then going around with hammer and tacks and tacking them up around the country." Porter received 1,717 votes in Madison County to 1,182 for Defenbach, but he lost the statewide election by a wide margin.

Perhaps the high point of Porter's involvement with Rotary was his trip to New York City to attend the conference of Rotary International. He kept a daily diary of the six thousand mile round trip. He and Nelle left Rexburg on June 1, 1949. They traveled by way of Salt Lake City, Denver, Laramie, Independence, and St. Louis, Missouri, Cambridge, Ohio, and Frederick, Maryland, on the way to a stop-off in Washington, D. C. They arrived in Washington, D. C., on June 9 and stayed at the home of Grace and Ray Bowden. Mrs. Bowden, sister

of Nelle, toured them around the city, and they were delighted. Porter called on Idaho Senators B. H. Miller and Glen Taylor.

The Porters arrived in New York City and checked into the Dixie Hotel on June 12. That day they registered for the convention at Madison Square Garden and toured part of the city with Maria Wisniewska, a sister of their son-in-law John Baranowski. In the evening the Rotarians and Rotary Anns were entertained by Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians and listened to the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale, pastor of Marble Collegiate Church, address the topic: "Formula for Great Days Ahead." Porter noted that the address was "one of the best of the convention."

Monday through Thursday were convention sessions centered on the theme "Developing Good Will Among Men." Conventioneers were entertained by several well-known entertainers such as Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Lanny Ross, Herb Shriner, and Jane Pickens. Porter noted sixty-four countries represented at the convention with a total of 16,694 in attendance. However, out of that number he "never met anyone from Idaho." Several people at the convention expressed to Porter that they thought he bore a resemblance to Harry S Truman, President of the United States.

The Porters left New York City on June 17 and headed home via Yonkers, N.Y., Palmyra — where sites incident to LDS Church history were visited — Niagara Falls, and Kirtland, Ohio. In Kirtland they visited more LDS historic sites. They traveled on to Chicago, then on to Nauvoo for more LDS history. They then drove to Carthage to visit the place where Joseph Smith died. From there they drove through Council Bluffs, Omaha, North Platte, Medicine Bow, Wyoming, Soda Springs, and Pocatello, arriving in Rexburg on June 27 about 11:00 p.m.

After the trip, the next day seemed anticlimactic. "Loafed around home most of day," wrote Porter. "Quite dissatisfied with no definite program."

On Thursday, June 30, Porter presented his convention report to the Rotary Club. The members must have been a little envious as they listened.

When Ann and Keith Zollinger's first baby was born, the Porter grandparents went to Portland to visit. Ann's mother rode the bus so

she could be there to help Ann when she went home from the hospital. Arthur drove up to bring Nelle back to Rexburg. While he was there he visited the local Rotary Club. He introduced himself and said that he had come to see his daughter and his thirtieth grandchild. "They all laughed and said, 'you mean you have come eight hundred miles just to see your thirtieth grandchild?'" Porter explained that "I'm a Democratic precinct committeeman and the other grandfather is the Republican precinct committeeman, and I have come to register this boy." Ann said that her father "laughed and laughed every time he would tell me that story. He said he thought that was a good joke."

November 1, 1950, was the date set to open the community chest fund drive in Rexburg under the direction of Jack Randall. Porter had been designated as director of the Rotary Club's efforts to raise funds. The goal was to raise \$10,000. When the campaign ended, about \$7,000 had been raised. Randall singled out Porter and the Rotary Club for special commendation for their contribution. Porter was noted, and would continue to be noted for many more years, as one of the most successful fund raisers in the community.

In 1954, Porter, Ezra Stucki, W. Lloyd Adams, and James E. Graham were appointed to the club bulletin and history committee. Porter was selected to chair the committee. He had direct responsibility for the *Rotary Jet*, the club bulletin, and saw to its weekly publication for several years.

The December 30, 1954, issue of the *Rexburg Journal* carried a front page picture of many members of Rotary Club, including Porter. They were being recognized as the "Milk Drinkingest Service Club in the United States." The president of the club, Herman Walz, said the "group is claiming the milk drinking title as an outgrowth of the recent meeting of dairy industry officials with President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower and Secretary of Agriculture [Ezra Taft] Benson."

On Friday, April 26, 1957, Porter noted with satisfaction that "last Saturday, April 20, was my eighty-first birthday. My wife prepared a special meal in honor of the occasion. My daughters gave me presents or sent remembrance cards. The Rotary Club, at their session of April 18, sang good wishes to me and many congratulated me personally. Hugh Drennen, proprietor of the Romance Theatre, sent complimentary tickets for myself and wife to any show we preferred, a

gift he has given us for many years. This ticket contains the following pleasing sentiment: 'We wish a happy birthday! and may the coming year bring you joy and success in all your endeavors. Admit two to any picture Romance and Elk Theatres, Rexburg,' signed Hugh Drennen, Manager. I have never been enthusiastic about recognition of my recurring birthdays marking the passing of my allotted time on earth, but I admit these kindly expressions give me pleasure and an uplift and new courage and faith."

Rotary Club would take note of Porter's birthdays for several more years. After all, he was soon their senior member. In 1965, Porter was awarded honorary membership in Rotary. This meant he was not subject to attendance and dues requirements, yet recognized his many years of contribution to the club. The *Rotary Jet* of April 21, 1966, began a list of Porter's accomplishments with this notation: "Hats off to Arthur Porter who celebrated his ninetieth birthday yesterday."

When Porter died on December 30, 1967, he concluded a career of over sixty years of community service with the Commercial Club and Chamber of Commerce, and forty-five years with Rotary Club. Both the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce eulogized him for his service. In a fitting tribute, the Chamber of Commerce awarded the "Madison County Hall of Fame Award":

Given for long and significant community building and for excellence of personal accomplishments, to

ARTHUR PORTER

We salute you, posthumously, and cite highlights in your full life:

CHURCH LEADER: Served an LDS mission in Switzerland. Served from 1905 to 1921 as superintendent of the first ward Sunday School, then as stake superintendent from 1921 to 1925. Served as counselor in the stake presidency with President George Romney and later with President Peter J. Ricks for a total of twenty years.

CIVIC LEADER: Served three terms on the Rexburg City Council. Mayor of Rexburg from 1929 to 1935. Represented Madison County in the State Legislature from 1943 to 1946. A firm believer in an effective Chamber of Commerce, he was secretary of the Rexburg Chamber for twelve years. Upon retirement, he was given a special award by this group.

EDUCATOR: Taught languages and science at Ricks Academy (later Ricks College) and was also a member of the Ricks College board of directors. The college awarded him a special service award in 1962. The beautiful lecture room in the David O. McKay Library building was also named for him. Served for a number of years as Madison County Superintendent of Schools.

COMMUNITY BUILDER: Had a firm hand in the establishment and development of the Madison County Fair, the county courthouse, the LDS tabernacle, the Rexburg cemetery, and, most of all, the lovely city park which is named for him.

BUSINESSMAN: Published the *Rexburg Journal* for over thirty-five years. Also founded Porter's Book Store and a job printing business. His three sons now operate and have expanded these thriving enterprises.

Awarded this thirty-first day of January, nineteen hundred and sixty-eight.



November 1906
"Student Rays"

O, fellow students bear with me,
While I proceed a poet to be,
And for a moment try to tell
Of men without a parallel.
There's Arthur P.—you've known
before—
A man well versed in bug-a-lore.
Who would not harm a bat or bee,
Nor tread on insect needlessly.
I fancy now, I see him stand
Before his class, with bug in hand.
I hear again, as oft before,
These words repeated o'er and o'er,
"When I in Switzerland did dwell,
I found a bug, as I shall tell,
So near like this, I do declare,
As anything I could compare."

7

County Fair Associations Boy Scouts & Hospital Advisory Board

Porter had been a stockholder in the Fremont Fair Association for some time before the meeting called on March 14, 1912 — in fact, he had been the secretary of the meeting held July 5, 1911, when the county fair association was proposed. The purpose of the meeting was to elect officers for the ensuing year. President Thomas E. Bassett called the meeting to order, but, before any business could be transacted, the secretary, Hyrum Ricks, Jr., had to call the roll to ascertain if “enough stock was represented to transact business officially.” The required number of shares necessary was 140 which was half plus one of the shares sold. Ricks certified that the stockholders present represented 147 shares so business could be transacted. A motion was made to “re-elect the present officers and directors as their work to date had been so highly commendable.” However, H. D. Winger, who “had never qualified as a director,” and Hyrum Ricks, Jr., who “resigned because of not having time to devote to the office the coming season,” needed to be released. Robert Fisher and Peter Taylor were elected directors. Porter was elected secretary, thus commencing his long involvement as a member of the fair board.

The county fair, held in early September 1912, was somewhat different from previous fairs. Previously, exhibitors would just show up

at the fair and expect to be cared for and often made demands for the best exhibit space or complained because someone else had better space. Bassett and Porter sent out a notice to anyone wishing to exhibit at the fair to notify Porter so that exhibit space could be allocated. A systematic method of controlling the fair exhibits was inaugurated and followed in subsequent years.

Porter published a notice during February 1913 that the Fremont Fair Association would meet at the Flamm Opera House on March 13 at 1:30 p.m. "for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year and transacting such other business as may properly come before the meeting." The meeting was held as scheduled. Porter called the roll to determine if enough shares of stock were represented to transact business. As 490 shares had been sold, 246 had to be represented. The directors were disappointed when not enough shares were represented to transact association business. The meeting was adjourned pursuant to another meeting called for Saturday, March 22, at Flamm's. Before the meeting, several personal invitations were extended to stockholders. When the meeting was called to order on March 22, Porter was able to certify that 255 shares were represented. President Bassett reported that during the past year, "extensive improvements had been made at the grounds and adjacent thereto, [and] these grounds [are] now among the finest and best equipped in the west." Porter reported that almost 250 shares of stock had been sold during the past year. An election was held for directors. Porter was elected one of twenty-five directors for the year. The directors met on March 29 and elected officers with Porter selected to the executive committee. The executive committee announced that the fair would be held from September 1 to 5.

The fair was advertised as being the "biggest exhibition and most attractive program ever given by the association." The fair was the biggest to date. "The exhibits were very fine in some particulars, though some features were not fully represented. The weather, except for the wind on the opening day, was ideal which added to the pleasure of those attending. The attendance was good, nearly two thousand being at the grounds on Wednesday. Altogether, this year's fair will be remembered as one of the most successful ever held in the county." Utah Power & Light Company was commended for providing additional electric lights free of charge along Main Street. Finally,

"there were no drunks to mar the pleasure of those who were out to enjoy themselves, and there were no accidents."

The Fremont Fair Association was reorganized as the Madison County Fair Association after Madison County was created in November 1913. From 1914 and thereafter, the fair has been known as the Madison County Fair or, more usually, simply the County Fair.

On July 29, 1914, Porter and other members of the executive committee traveled to Blackfoot in John X. Anderson's Ford to see the Allman Brothers Carnival to determine if they should invite the carnival owners to Rexburg for the fair to be held September 1 to 3. Riding an automobile to Blackfoot in 1914 was not too usual. They rode for three hours to get there and four hours on the return trip, arriving home about 3:30 a.m., July 30.

The committee decided against the Allman Brothers Carnival. However, they secured one of the most exciting spectacles, they assured the public, ever to be at the fair. The Moisant International Aviation Company of New York agreed to bring an airplane to Rexburg for the fair and demonstrate what the plane could do. However, a few days before the big opening day of the fair, a letter was received from the Moisant International Aviation Company which said, quite simply, "Aviator refused. Afraid [of] altitude." A balloonist was secured at the last minute and performed on September 2 and 3, but, compared to a real airplane, a balloon just held no excitement.

A number of disgruntled people blamed the fair board executive committee. That committee, smarting under the criticism, engaged another airplane demonstration but did not advertise the fact. The first the local people knew about it was when an airplane appeared over the area on September 24. The pilot, J. Floyd Smith, gave quite a demonstration. "He circled over the town several times and went far out over the surrounding country. At times he was up to the clouds and again would swoop down nearer the city. He executed a series of dips that gave a thrill and, near the fair grounds, circled in a spiral, at times holding the machine upright on edge," commented an excited reporter for the *Current-Journal*. "The machine was always in perfect control and moved as smoothly as a bird, sailing great distances without apparently changing level an inch."

Smith's control in the air was not matched by his control when he landed. He hit a fence by the side of the road and badly damaged the wings. Because such accidents happened rather frequently, the pilot had arranged to have his mechanic follow him to Rexburg to help repair the plane just in case of such circumstances. They telegraphed for parts and began to repair the damage.

By September 30, the plane was repaired and ready to fly. A special demonstration was scheduled for September 30 and October 1. Adults were charged fifty cents each and children were admitted to the fair grounds free of charge. Smith put the plane through maneuvers which left the spectators breathless doing dips and dives, circles and loops. One interesting feature was the race between the airplane and a car driven by Emmett Poole. The plane won.

The prestige of the fair committee was restored. Just one problem remained — a large number of spectators did not go to the fair grounds to watch. They could see the airplane demonstration from almost any place in town, so why pay fifty cents. Total receipts of the two-day affair were \$159, far below expenses. Members of the fair committee ended up footing most of the bill.

The Madison County Fair Association continued to have a yearly fair for a few years. The 1919 fair was funded by the county commission but illustrated the post-World War I recession. The commission appropriated \$1,200 for the fair in the fall of 1919. The executive committee could not see how they could hold an adequate fair unless more money was allocated. Porter and James R. Wright were dispatched to the county commission meeting on July 21 to argue the case of the fair board needing an additional \$800 to get the grounds in shape. The commission was sympathetic but sensitive to a tight budget. However, they compromised and allocated an additional \$500.

The 1920 fair was cancelled because of a lack of funds. That happened off and on over the next several years due to the depression and World War II.

Porter's lasting contribution to the Madison County Fair was in getting the county commissioners convinced to purchase the grounds. He and F. D. Turner attended the commission meeting on July 8, 1929, and presented a petition asking the commission to purchase the fair grounds. The commissioners were noncommittal but took the

matter "under advisement." Porter and others must have done some personal lobbying with the commissioners because, at the commission meeting August 12, the commissioners responded to the petition by passing a resolution that the grounds of the Fremont Fair Association be purchased. The grounds were mortgaged "to the late R. S. Hunt" and the administrator of the estate was "about to foreclose said mortgage and that said property is to be sold at public auction and will be lost to the public unless the county purchase same." The encumbrance against the property was \$5,300 and that was the purchase price. The commission agreed to pay \$2,000 in January 1930 and \$3,300 in January 1931. Henceforth, the county commission would have direct control over the county fair. A fair board, appointed by the commission, would still have organizational responsibilities. Porter had to feel satisfied with the arrangement.

Early in November 1926, Fremont LDS Stake announced official affiliation with the Teton Peaks Council, Boy Scouts of America. Headquarters were in Idaho Falls. Fremont Stake now qualified for official representation in the council. To determine the representative, all registered troops in Fremont Stake met Sunday, November 14, to choose a district chairman. Porter was chosen for the important position. He would represent Madison County in the Teton Peaks Council. (In 1926, Fremont Stake encompassed only Madison County. This created some confusion with Fremont County, but Fremont Stake would not become Rexburg Stake for about ten years.) By his election as district chairman, Porter automatically became a vice-president of the entire council.

A council-wide meeting was called to set the budget for the 1927 year. A budget of \$6,000 was adopted. Madison County's share was \$500. A local committee was organized under the supervision of Porter to oversee the various areas of scouting in Madison County and to raise money.

The community was pleased with the affiliation with the national Boy Scout organization. In fact, to show support, the Commercial Club, Rotary Club, and the city council each pledged \$100 to be applied toward the \$500. Porter was a member of both the Commercial Club and Rotary Club and had influence with the city council, so he

undoubtedly was persuasive in seeing that each organization helped with funding the scout program.

On December 8, 1926, Teton Peaks Council held the annual election of officers for the ensuing year. Porter was elected one of five vice-presidents.

At the Rotary Club luncheon on July 28, 1927, a decision was made to further aid Teton Peaks Council. The club voted to "build a substantial log cabin at the Boy Scout camp at Pineview" and donate it to the council. The work was estimated to cost about \$325 and commenced during the first part of August. The cabin was completed by mid-September. The officers of Teton Peaks Council, meeting in St. Anthony on September 27, "formally accepted the gift of the cabin built by the Rexburg Rotary Club at the camp at Pineview and included in the minutes a resolution of appreciation to Rexburg Rotarians for this fine gift. They also, by resolution, made this cabin, which is the first to be contributed, the authorized type and style of cabins that may be built there by future contributors. To this end they authorized their executive to secure drawings, photographs, and blue prints of this cabin. The Knights of Columbus [of Idaho Falls] are building a similar cabin at the camp."

In November 1927, Porter was elected to another term as district chairman of the Madison County Boy Scouts District. He would also serve another term on the Teton Peaks Council Executive Committee.

Porter and Dr. Ray J. Davis attended a Boy Scout executive meeting in Idaho Falls on August 1, 1928. Oscar Kirkham of Salt Lake City, a member of the national Boy Scout council, was in attendance for the purpose of ascertaining local opinion regarding the feasibility of changing Teton Peaks Council and two other southeastern councils to Twelfth District with headquarters in San Francisco. Presently, headquarters were in Portland. Being changed to Twelfth District would be advantageous, considered the local council, because Teton Peaks Council would then be in the same district as Utah. A decision would have to wait on the national Boy Scout office. However, at the September 25 executive meeting of the Teton Peaks Council held in Rexburg, the regional commissioner, Dr. J. W. West of Idaho Falls representing Teton Peaks Council, was instructed that the local council was in favor of moving from Eleventh to the Twelfth Regional District.

The regional council, meeting in Spokane, acted favorably on the requested change.

Oscar Kirkham was in Idaho Falls again in May 1929 and gave "an inspirational address" to those attending the district meeting of Teton Peaks Council. Porter was in attendance.

Late in December 1929, Porter received some attention from the Boy Scout state deputy director. He was appointed as a merit badge examiner in "printing, interpreting, and journalism."

Porter continued serving on the executive committee of Teton Peaks Council through 1930 and 1931. By late 1931, the Boy Scout movement had shown steady growth in the Upper Snake River Valley and especially in Rexburg. Porter had to have been given much credit for the growth by his enthusiastic support. He must have been especially proud when his son Arthur received his Eagle Scout badge on Monday, October 12.

Elections were held on October 28, 1931, for officials in the Teton Peaks Council for another year. Porter was again elected to the executive committee as one of the vice-presidents. The committee set the budget for 1932 at \$5,400 which was "one thousand dollars less than the 1931 budget" and \$600 less than the 1927 budget. Effects of the depression were being felt in the scouting program.

A report was made at the October 28 meeting that Porter's district led the council in scout advancements.

On Monday evening, March 7, 1932, Porter met with Troop No. 54 to participate in "a very impressive Tenderfoot investiture ceremony." Porter gave "some timely and important instruction." Later he met "with the troop committeemen and bishopric in a separate meeting and discussed the scouting situation as it exists in our community, giving some much needed advice."

During the early summer of 1932, Porter's son Warren had an interesting experience: "I remember when I was first a scout. I was kind of big for my age," Warren recalled. "In those days they didn't have driver licenses; you just started driving when you were big enough. I remember one night Dad asked me why I wasn't going to the stake dance in Sugar City. He liked to dance; it was a big hobby of his. I told him that I didn't have a way over there. 'Well,' he said, 'you can take the car.' I had just turned twelve, so I loaded up the car and took

a bunch of scouts and drove over there. I wasn't a very good driver; we just barely made it over there. I don't think Dad realized I was only twelve."

On August 23, 1932, word spread through Rexburg that "an ox team on its way to the Scout Jamboree at Idaho Falls had passed through Sugar City that morning and was 'speeding' on toward Rexburg. At 5:15 p.m. the crowd was rewarded for their patience as four great lumbering oxen drew into Main Street pulling a large 'covered wagon' with the motto 'Scout Jamboree or Bust' adorning its sides. The oxen labored under massive wooden yokes which were a strange curiosity to the children but which brought back happy as well as bitter memories to older spectators. A short program was held on Main Street at which Mayor Porter was master of ceremonies. He extended a welcome and hospitality of the city to Jim Beard, owner of the ox team, and to the pioneers" including Brigham Ricks and Fred Smith, two of the original Rexburg settlers.

The ox team made it to Idaho Falls in time for the big scout jamboree. The jamboree was noted as an "outstanding success. Upwards of two thousand scouts and scouters were in attendance. The great pageant parade was fully a mile long. Madison County was well represented by marching troops of scouts and scouters under supervision of local commissioner J. Austin Watts. They also entered a float featuring the trappers that inhabited this valley from 1810 to 1840. Joseph Perry of Lorenzo impersonated the trapper with his dogs, tent, and wild animals in the surrounding forest. B. L. Waldram, Allan Ricks, F. D. Kelley, and Arthur Porter, Jr., prepared the float."

Porter would soon finish his turn as scout executive. He did participate in the unveiling ceremony in the Rexburg Fourth Ward of the project of that scout troop. They had installed a fireplace in the scout room. Several demonstrations were presented by scouts. Porter was there in a triple capacity: scout executive, member of the Fremont Stake Presidency, and mayor of Rexburg.

Porter's other duties called for a lot of his time, so after 1932, his interest in scouting was primarily as a father who aided his sons interested in scouting. He did continue to function as a merit badge counselor for many years.

At the September 17, 1948, county commission meeting, Lee L. White (replaced by Emil Nef in January 1950), chairman, William I. Holley, and Harry Graham decided that the presently constituted county hospital board did not represent a wide enough diversity of county citizenry. Also, the commissioners expected that they would "soon be planning and erecting a county memorial hospital," and the present board could use some help. Therefore, the commissioners appointed an "advisory board" consisting of Porter, George Briggs, Jr., John L. Nelson, Ernest Blaser, and Dr. Harlo B. Rigby. These men joined David L. DaBell, Bennett Smith, Ralph A. Parker, Bert Harward, Lefel A. Bean, and Delbert G. Taylor.

Already, on September 14, 1948, a bond election had passed giving the commission authority to sell the "general obligation coupon bonds of the county in the amount of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000)." So the hospital advisory board could begin immediately to advise the county commission without worrying about funding the project. On March 14, 1950, the commission passed a resolution to sell the bonds and advertise for bids. On April 11, the commissioners surveyed the bids and noted that the Department of Public Investments of the State of Idaho had the lowest bid on the bonds at two and one-quarter percent. They accepted the bid.

Porter quickly became involved in the affairs of the advisory board. He, along with DaBell, Taylor, and Parker, traveled to Idaho Falls on Saturday, August 20, 1949, to "decide on suitable brick for the hospital. We decided," Porter noted, "on the light colored bricks at the Ammon brickyard."

Despite the fact that Porter was appointed county superintendent of schools by the county commission on September 12, 1949, he did not neglect his duty as a member of the hospital advisory board. He often attended commission meetings as spokesman for the advisory board.

On February 13, 1950, the advisory board and L. E. Stalker of Idaho Falls, the architect, presented to the commission plans and specifications for the new hospital. The commission approved the plans and ordered publication of a notice for bids for the hospital.

The advisory board was in attendance at the March 20 commission meeting. They were praised for their work by chairman William I.

Holley. Stalker added his praise for the work of the board. At the meeting, bids for the new hospital were opened. Davis Construction Company of Rexburg was low bidder. Porter was in attendance at the commission meeting on March 27 when the bid was formally accepted and contracts extended.

Apparently, the public became concerned about the pace of construction and began complaining to the advisory board, then criticizing them. This prompted the board to draft and present a letter to the county commission on November 13, 1950. "This committee, although created and existing only as an advisory body," noted the letter, "has had to shoulder the brunt of public criticism for what appeared to be unnecessary delay in getting the hospital under construction. We have already suggested that a full-time supervisor be employed to assume full responsibility for solving the problems needing immediate attention, but no action has been taken, and, if we did not now emphasize to your board, which has the only legal authority to take action, the steps which we consider necessary to avoid further delays, we should be justly open to public criticism."

The advisory board noted that further delay could be expected because most items of equipment and supplies "will take from six months to a year to obtain after the order is placed." The board recommended that a qualified supervisor be immediately employed "to undertake the solution of the immediate problems and to manage the hospital upon completion." The board volunteered to be involved in the selection process if the commissioners desired. If the county commission minutes are any indication, the letter and its recommendations was ignored.

The county commissioners' response to criticism by the advisory board was to appoint a new hospital board in early January 1951. Porter was not reappointed. Not being reappointed probably was not too disappointing as he was involved in public school business. In addition to that responsibility, on January 22, 1951, he was appointed a member of the Madison County Council of Public Assistance, work with which he had long been familiar. A little over two months later, on March 27, Porter was appointed chairman of the personnel committee of the recently organized Madison County Civil Defense Unit under the direction of Gordon Dixon. Porter had plenty of

opportunity to keep busy in public service without the hospital board job.



Margaret , unknown girl & Jessie Claire on top of float, Mary Nell & Ann on fenders



Virginia, Jessie, Gertrude - back row, Louise, John - front

8

City Councilman 1913-1919

In mid-March 1913, petitions were signed, duly filed, and the "People's Ticket" was officially in the campaign for mayor and city council. The ticket included the following: Nathan Ricks for mayor; Arthur Porter, Jr., and Ezra C. Dalby, councilmen from the first precinct; A. M. Carbine and N. P. Hansen, councilmen from the second precinct; and N. H. Hallstrom and Fred Parkinson, councilmen from the third precinct. Porter had now entered into a long career of intense political activity.

The *Current-Journal* stated: "These men are all thoroughly capable to manage the government of our city and, if elected, will give a good administration. They are pledged to enforce the law and to give Rexburg a good, clean, businesslike administration. These men have been established here a long while, and their position on the moral and business interests of the people is well known. They are men of considerable property interests and are vitally interested in the welfare of this community."

The opposition fielded the "Citizens' Ticket." Running for mayor was Steve J. Skelton. Running against Porter and Dalby in the first precinct were A. H. Woodvine and Heber Ricks.

Henry J. Flamm, chairman of the People's Party, and W. Lloyd Adams, secretary, issued a challenge to the candidates of the Citizens' Party through their chairman, James A. Langton, to meet in Flamm's Hall on March 31 to discuss and debate campaign issues. The supposition, of course, was that the citizenry would all turn out to listen and question. The debate never came off, but, for campaign strategy, the People's Party took the offensive. After all, they had issued the challenge and by so doing made an early and lasting impression with the electorate. The Citizens' Party was cast in the posture of being afraid to face the public in open debate with the People's Party candidates.

April 1, 1913, indicated just how effective the campaign of the People's Party had been. The turnout was exceptionally large with almost all registered voters voting. Only those who were "out of town or sick in bed" did not vote. Every candidate of the People's Party was elected. A newspaper reporter optimistically noted that "all factions are together again, and everybody is well satisfied with the results."

Tuesday, April 15, 1913, new city officers entered upon their service to the citizenry. The outgoing city council finished their business, then city clerk, J. C. Anderson, administered the oath of office to the newly elected officials.

Mayor Ricks appointed Porter to the judiciary committee, streets, public grounds, cemetery and improvements committees, and water works and fire department committees. Over the next several years Porter put his stamp on the town as he became quite aggressive in carrying out his committee assignments.

That first council meeting of the next administration laid groundwork for subsequent disposal of several matters. The mayor appointed department heads and designated April 25 as clean-up day. Motions were introduced, discussed, and carried that each "committee report as soon as possible the amount of money necessary to pay the present indebtedness and the possible expenses for the next year with a view of calling a special bond election;" that "no smoking be permitted in the council room while the council is in session and the chief of police be instructed to enforce this resolution;" the city was to "advertise for bids for running the sprinkler wagon by the hour and by

the month;" and, finally, the sanitation committee was to "see that the livery stables on Main Street be cleaned up."

Livery stables on Main Street had been a matter of agitation for some time by those who felt the stables created an unhealthy situation and an eyesore in the middle of town. Anyway, the faction argued, the horse-using public could be served just as well if the livery stables were located on secondary streets. The livery owners argued that they had a right to pursue their occupation without harassment from local trouble-makers. The city council decided that merely cleaning up the stables was not enough. The "chief of police was instructed to see the Walters Livery Stable about moving the stable off Main Street." The city council would still be trying to get the stables off Main Street a year later.

Meanwhile, Porter and the water works committee were to see to digging up the water main on Central Avenue. "Porter moved that the matter of cleaning out the gutters on Main Street be referred to the streets committee." The motion carried and Porter, as chairman of streets, public grounds, cemetery, and improvements committees, could now see that the gutters were cleaned out. The notion was that getting the stables off Main Street would certainly help the gutter problem. Because the streets committee was so directly involved in numerous projects, the council voted that the committee on streets and public grounds was authorized to have any necessary work done without referring it to the city council."

The water works committee had to resolve immediate problems. Several citizens had not paid their water tax. As a result, Water Superintendent P. O. Thompson was authorized "to shut off the water on the tenth of each month if the tax is not paid." Several water lines had frozen during the past winter and water had been shut off to the lines. Lines to several private residences had not been reopened. Petitions were presented to the city council requesting immediate action. Porter and the water works committee responded quickly and made a good impression with the waterless citizens.

John W. Long was awarded the bid to sprinkle city streets at thirty-five cents per hour. To pay for sprinkling, the "judiciary committee recommended that a sprinkling ordinance be drawn up levying a tax of six cents per foot on business property and three cents per foot on residence property."

The streets committee was given responsibility to check conditions of each street and authorize any repairs to "keep them in a safe condition." Also, they were to report and recommend improvements. Porter reported at council meeting May 20, 1913, "that the question of cement walks had been considered and recommended building about thirty-two blocks and twenty crossings." To undertake a project of that magnitude necessitated an ordinance creating a local improvement district. LID No. 4 was created by Ordinance No. 167, July 12, 1913, and laying of cement sidewalks and crossings in part of the city was commenced.

Representatives of the Woodmen of the World Lodge met with the city council on May 20, 1913, to invite the council to attend the banquet to be held as the culminating activity for the State WOW convention meeting in Rexburg, May 21. Hallstrom moved and Porter seconded that the invitation of the WOW to the city council to attend their banquet on May 21 "be accepted and that the city be turned over to the Woodmen for that day." City administrators attended as special guests. Porter was one of the after dinner speakers. Later, everyone enjoyed a dance at the WOW dance hall.

At council meeting June 21, 1913, "Porter presented a proposition made by Hyrum Ricks, Sr., to give part of his lot for a street provided the city move his fence, readjust his irrigation ditch, cut his trees and move them into his lot, and place a public light on that corner." The proposition, with all its demands, was accepted.

Porter provided impetus and the motion at council meeting July 5 for a city bond election. The council approved and the election was held August 30. The city council had effectively educated the public about the benefit of passing the \$10,000 and \$30,000 bond issues. They carried by a large majority. "The vote may be taken as an indication of the feeling of the public toward the work being done and proposed by the administration," noted a newspaper reporter. "The people feel that the work is economical and good value is being received, and they are willing to support and endorse the officers in this work. The disposition of Mayor Ricks and council is to invest the public funds thus supplied conservatively and in such manner as is desired and asked by the public."

Under state "local option" laws, Rexburg was a "dry" city. One method used by some enterprising drinkers was to buy non-prescription medicine with a high alcohol content in some drug stores. Others, either from real or feigned illnesses, tried to convince the physician to prescribe some medicine which would assuage thirst more than treat illness. Many medicines had an alcohol base. To stop this kind of circumvention of local option, the city council passed Ordinance No. 172, November 15, 1913. The ordinance established conditions by which pharmacists could sell intoxicating liquors and conditions under which physicians could prescribe intoxicating liquors, affixing a fine not to exceed \$100 for the first offense and an additional penalty of twenty-five days in jail for a second offense. Wine could only be sold for sacramental purposes and then only by application signed by a bishop or clergyman. Of course, there was an immediate economic impact on drug stores. Rumors circulated that a surreptitious medicinal shot of liquor in drug stores could still be obtained. To combat such alleged illegal activity, Ordinance No. 174 passed December 20, 1913, dictating that screens, partitions, etc., in drug stores were to be removed so the interior was plainly visible to see that no unauthorized liquor was being sold or consumed. Now the mayor, a councilman, or the constabulary could see what was being drunk and by whom. Of course enforcement of local option was an ongoing problem just as would be statewide and national prohibition.

Nevertheless, the city council continued a campaign, with Porter very much in the forefront, to legislate local morality. On January 3, 1914, Ordinance No. 175 became law providing for "prohibition of immoral dances known as Raggin', Tango, Bunny Hug, Texas Tony, Turks Trot, Three Step, Grizzly Bear, or any other immoral dance or performance vulgar in its nature . . ." Those sponsoring dances were responsible to see that "immoral" dances were not engaged in, subject to a fine of not less than \$5 or more than \$50 for each offense.

Ordinance No. 175A, enacted June 6, 1914, further indicated the city council's collective temper. By the ordinance's terms, the council could declare a "common nuisance" any place "deemed dangerous to public health or good morals of the community or which shall offend the senses or shall obstruct or abridge or hinder or annoy any considerable number of the individual members of the community."

The violator could be summoned before the council. If he failed to appear, legal proceedings would be instituted.

There were those in the city and on the council who believed that city water works would be run more efficiently and payment for water used more equitable if the city would install water meters. Porter was to report May 23, 1914, the consensus of the water works committee relative to the meter question. Quickly apparent was the fact that Porter was not interested in pursuing the installation of water meters. He "moved that the matter of meters be tabled. The question was voted down. Parkinson moved that the committee report next meeting without fail." Carried. Apparently some members of the council were somewhat miffed that Porter had not given them enough information. However, at the May 30 meeting, the report was complete and satisfactory. "Porter reported that the water committee recommended that the purchase of water meters would not be a profitable investment for the city at this time. Report was accepted."

Porter's acknowledged reputation in financial matters carried the day. No one, however, was to be exempt from paying for city water despite not having the water metered. The council agreed with Porter when he moved that the Rexburg Athletic Association be permitted to use water for a skating rink provided no "charge is made for skating and that they pay for the cost of the water." The water meter issue would be on the agenda of several future council meetings and several future councils. Porter did try to ameliorate the situation by directing that the "water works superintendent inspect all taps on the system once in three months and report."

Porter's first term as councilman from the first precinct was concerned mainly with city water works and street conditions. He was chairman of that committee. Ditches were constructed, bridges built, curb and gutter installed, a horse-drawn sprinkler for streets was purchased, and electric lights were installed in several places. He demonstrated his diligence by not missing a single council meeting. The same could not be said for any other councilman.

Early in 1915, Porter had to decide if he was going to be a candidate for a second term on the city council. He accepted the nomination as a councilman from the first precinct on the "Taxpayers' Ticket." Porter did not spend much time campaigning — a characteristic

of all his political campaigns. His progressive stance on city improvement and his conservative stance on public morality were well known. He evidently decided that his record did not need to be defended from the stump. The *Current-Journal* did carry an article on each of the candidates on the Taxpayers' Ticket. "Arthur Porter, Jr.," noted the article, "is well known in the community for his especial fitness for public service. Much public good has resulted from his personal efforts. During the fifteen years he has lived in Rexburg, he has always been on the job. He has the distinction of being one of the first men to suggest the organization of the county fair. He is just at the age in years and experience when his services are worth a great deal to the community. He has served with credit as councilman during the last two years. His ability is readily recognized by men of affairs, and he should be elected. We need his services."

The April 27 city election demonstrated the confidence the electorate had in the Taxpayers' Ticket. They won every office. Porter garnered 145 votes in the first precinct.

The next administration was installed Saturday evening, May 1, 1915. Mayor Fred S. Parkinson appointed Porter to committees on streets, public grounds and cemetery, irrigation, and water works and fire department. He was appointed to continue his service of the past two years.

The irrigation committee immediately had to solve a problem: T. J. Winter "moved that the matter of [the] drowning [of] Mrs. Fred Smith's chickens be referred to the irrigation committee." Carried.

Porter was again appointed chairman of the committees on streets, public grounds and cemetery. The streets committee directed the city clerk to advertise for bids to sprinkle the city streets. John T. Long, who had previously had the contract, had had some problems occasionally with his team of horses not being able to pull the sprinkler. The new bid specifications indicated that "no bid would be accepted by any bidder unless his team should weigh over 1,350 pounds each and should have proper harness."

W. E. Gee and Austin Watts attended the city council meeting on June 5, 1915. They represented the "parents class," and expressed concern that the mayor and city council had not been diligent in enforcing laws against public profanity. The council agreed to take

some action. Wilford Ricks "moved that cards be printed and posted in public places warning against the use of profanity." Carried. The problem was more far reaching than some adult profaning in public. Seemingly, children were also guilty of the offense. "Porter moved that an ordinance be drawn up by the attorney making it unlawful for children to profane." Carried.

In a further effort to clean up the city and relating to the drowning of Mrs. Fred Smith's chickens, Porter, in the council meeting on July 20, "moved that an ordinance be drawn regulating poultry running at large in the city." Carried. There did not seem to be too much pressure to enact an ordinance because nine months later, in April 1916, Ordinance No. 194 was passed prohibiting the "owners of domestic fowls from allowing same" to run at large in the city or trespass on others' property.

Problems relating to city streets became more acute with the arrival of more and more "motor vehicles." Not only were they harder on street surfaces than horse-drawn vehicles, but there were those drivers who simply had no respect for the safety of people in other vehicles or pedestrians. Porter led the discussion on what to do about motor vehicle problems. The result was Ordinance No. 186, enacted August 21, 1915, which established rules for driving a motor vehicle on the streets of Rexburg. Each vehicle was to have a horn which was to be blown before entering an intersection to warn someone approaching from the right or left, brakes were required, and at least one light which had to be visible both forward and backward. No child under sixteen years of age was to be allowed to drive. Fifteen miles per hour was the maximum allowable speed. Seven or eight miles per hour was considered a reasonable speed for city driving.

The council meeting of September 13, 1916, brought to Porter an assignment which he considered most significant but turned out to be most frustrating. N. H. Hallstrom "moved that the mayor appoint a committee of three, the mayor being chairman, to meet with the county commissioners on the matter of a joint city and county building." The council agreed. Along with Porter, the mayor appointed Eli McEntire and Henry J. Flamm. The committee met but was hampered by the resignation from the council of McEntire. At the council meeting November 3, 1915, Porter argued that the whole council needed to be

involved in a site-selection committee which should also include the city attorney and the city clerk. The council agreed to form a committee of the whole.

At the next meeting, November 8, the committee reported agreement on a site at the east end of Main Street. The site selected was published and immediately was challenged by some and defended by others. Two delegations met with the council on November 20. One protested a Main Street site for the city-county building. They filed a petition calling for use of present city hall property. The other group argued in favor of the Main Street site. The council minutes note, with asperity, "the question was discussed." No decision was reached by the council so they decided to notify the county commissioners that the city council was not ready to report. In an attempt to placate those who dissented from the Main Street site, the council decided to advertise for a site. Those who wished to suggest a site needed to explain, in addition to location, the size of the site, what it would cost, and any other information which would help the council make a decision.

The next move in the city-county building site controversy occurred early in March 1916. Mayor Parkinson and the council met with county commissioners and agreed that a site on Main Street between the Porter and Walker properties would satisfy the council and commissioners. However, parties who owned the site would have to give clear title to the property. Ross J. Comstock met with the council on behalf of owners of the site and "made a request that the council vacate the street from Second East on Main Street for ten rods for the purpose of getting title to the property on which to construct a city and county building. Moved by Flamm that the request of Mr. Comstock be granted and that the city attorney prepare an ordinance closing and vacating Main Street ten rods east of Second East. Seconded by Porter." Porter, Flamm and R. G. Archibald, who had been appointed to complete the unexpired term of McEntire, voted "yes." Ricks, Winter, and Hallstrom voted "no." Mayor Parkinson cast the deciding vote. Much to the disappointment of Porter, Parkinson voted "no" and the motion lost.

The meeting ended with yet another proposed agreement between the city council and county commission to continue searching for an acceptable site. Also, the commissioners were to be notified that the

council was still "in favor of a joint city and county building regardless of the location." Interest in the project quickly waned in the community. In July 1917, the city council announced again continued interest in a city-county building. The construction of the courthouse was eventually commenced in July 1919 but not as a city-county building. It was built after a bond election initiated by the county commission.

On March 13, 1916, at the Commercial Club annual meeting, a committee was appointed to see what steps were necessary to open an avenue from Main Street to the academy. The committee was composed of Porter, Fred S. Parkinson, Timothy J. Winter, James R. Wright, and R. S. Hunt. The notion to build an avenue to the academy had been worked on almost since the stone building had been completed on campus. Committees had been appointed before but had been unable to resolve problems involved — mostly in property acquisition. But the 1916 committee had a distinct advantage over previous committees. Parkinson, Winter, and Porter were all on the city council and thus had some extra clout. Another committee was appointed to oversee finances. The two "committees got busy and secured contributions from the general public to the amount of about \$2,500, from interested property owners along the right of way about \$7,600 in addition to right of way contributed, except part of the Main Street frontage, and finally, \$2,000 from the city." The amount raised missed meeting the estimated expense by \$100. The main items of expense consisted of "purchase of a new site for the Elite Billiard Hall and erection of another building and removal of tenants, estimated at \$8,000; purchase of the D. W. Charles frontage, \$3,500 (\$700 of which was contributed); removal of the Claude Ellsworth home, estimated at \$800; expense of B. M. Larsen property, \$400; expense of Gottlieb Bieri property, \$200."

To confirm the work of the avenue committees, the city council enacted Ordinance No. 201, June 28, 1916. A strip of land in blocks 38 and 40 was deeded to the city by the terms of the ordinance and accepted for use as a "public highway" and named "College Avenue." The city would be required to maintain and improve the street. At the same council meeting, Ordinance No. 202 was enacted which created Local Improvement District No. 8 which made provision for cementing

sidewalks on College Avenue and Center Street. The *Current-Journal* noted that, "naturally, an undertaking of this kind, involving public and private interests, and requiring considerable investments, could not be accomplished without arousing some difference of opinion as to the desirability of the change. Now that the matter is decided, everybody is pleased with the results. It is a big boost for our city."

Porter was very active in political affairs in 1916. He had met with the Madison County Democratic Party in the Commercial Club rooms May 13. Democrats had enthusiastically endorsed Woodrow Wilson for another term as United States President and Moses Alexander for another term as Idaho's governor. John E. Pincock was nominated as state senatorial candidate from Madison County. Porter was chosen as one of the delegates to attend the state Democratic convention in Pocatello June 18.

Porter was still a councilman and did not expect to run for any public office in 1916. But about three weeks before the elections, Luella Garner, Democratic candidate for superintendent of public instruction for Madison County, decided she could not continue the campaign because of "home duties." The Madison County Democratic Central Committee asked Porter to become the candidate. He accepted. The republican candidate was A. F. Rasmussen. Porter had the credentials in education to be county superintendent, but not enough time to campaign effectively. Actually, Porter campaigned harder for Pincock for state senator than he did for himself for county superintendent. Pincock was running against Nathan Ricks. According to Porter's own record, he "was very active on election day in the Rexburg First Precinct, calling on voters, bringing them to the polls, holding babies while the mothers went to vote. My activity was unexpected and there was no such activity on the Republican side."

John E. Pincock was elected. "Nathan Ricks was defeated in his own precinct, the Rexburg First Precinct. I was given the credit or blame. It was a big surprise as 'Uncle Nathan' was one of the beloved men in the ward. I hardly thought I had been that effective. I have done much better organization work in later campaigns." Porter did not seem too upset in his defeat by Rasmussen for superintendent of schools. Considering the short time he had to campaign, Porter made a creditable showing, losing by 143 votes out of 2,449 cast.

Porter did not neglect his duties as councilman while he participated in the 1916 election. He saw adopted his recommendation that the Oregon Short Line Railroad pay "thirty-five cents per one thousand gallons of water furnished engines." He led the opposition to a request filed by J. E. Winzler on October 4 for a license to run a pool hall on Main Street. Porter pointed out that already there were two pool halls on Main Street and that was enough. The council agreed. However, J. W. Randall appeared before the city council November 22 and filed for a license to open a pool hall. Flamm moved that the motion of October 4, that two pool halls were enough, be reconsidered. The motion passed with Porter and Hallstrom dissenting. After some discussion, Hallstrom moved, Porter seconded, that the October 4 motion stand allowing only two pool halls to be licensed. "Flamm moved a substitute motion that the matter be deferred until next meeting. Seconded by Archibald." Four voted for the motion; Porter and Hallstrom voted against. Before the next meeting, Porter and Hallstrom evidently articulated their views effectively because, at the meeting November 29, all voted in favor of allowing no more pool halls.

Early in 1917, Porter was absent from several city council meetings for a very good reason — he was in Boise attending the legislative session. Porter explained in his journal: "Come January, I went to Boise with others to meet our candidates. The governor and state officers were Democratic as well as a majority of the legislature — the first time for many years. I was surprised to read in the paper the night before the session that I was named as assistant [chief] clerk of the house. I didn't want the job, never knew there was such a job. Besides, I couldn't afford to leave my business in Rexburg. However, the members from our county insisted it was my duty, so I telephoned home and the family assured me they could take care of everything, so I stayed."

Actually, getting Porter elected as assistant chief clerk took some doing. Charles S. Moody of Bonner County moved that M. H. Eustace of Canyon County be elected chief clerk of the house and Arthur Porter of Madison County be elected assistant chief clerk. The motion was seconded by Ernest Anderson of Canyon County. Before a vote could be taken, F. C. McGowen of Latah County nominated David

Burrell of Power County as chief clerk and Frank Hahn of Adams County as assistant chief clerk. He made a motion that his nominees be accepted rather than those nominated by Moody and each attache voted on separately. His motion was seconded by Peter G. Johnston of Bingham County. Moody immediately moved and Anderson seconded, that McGowen's motion be tabled. The motion carried. "McGowen arose to a question of personal privilege and asked for a division of the question stating that [Representative] Kiger [of Kootenai County] and Johnston joined with him in the request. The chair held that the point was well taken and ruled that the question should be voted on separately and instructed the house to vote for the office of chief clerk separately."

The votes showed Eustace defeating Burrell by a vote of 36-28. Anderson then moved, McGowen seconded, that the rest of the attaches be voted on as a whole. Carried, 36-28. McGowen then moved, seconded by Anderson, that the election of Eustace and Porter be made unanimous. Carried unanimously. Porter thus had the job of assistant chief clerk at \$5 per day. He was sworn in on January 8.

"The speaker was named Harvey Allred and was an experienced legislator. The chief clerk, Mr. Eustace, was from Caldwell. He did the reading of bills and was good at it. I was the greenest of attaches." Porter had three main responsibilities. He was in "charge of all bills." He had to keep track of what "action was taken" on the bills, and he had "to keep the daily calendar and the daily journal and have them printed." He confessed that he "was terribly confused and wished I was home. The legislature hired the Republican clerk who had served in the last session to coach me for a week. They also appointed a Mrs. Stockslager, a brilliant young woman who had worked in other sessions, to be my assistant. Even then I was too slow for the fast moving events."

Porter had an interesting introduction to Governor Moses Alexander: "The first act after organization is to pass a bill to provide for the expenses of the session and to pay salaries," wrote Porter. "This was done under suspension of the rules. As there are always a number of carryover bills of a number of experienced members, these routine matters were rushed through too fast for me to know what was happening. So the 'Feed bill,' as it is called, was passed and signed by

the speaker and given to me to take to the governor which I did as quickly as possible."

"After handing it to his excellency, I took a seat and waited for him to sign. After a few minutes, he looked up from his work and, noticing, asked if there was anything else I wanted. I respectfully reminded him of the said bill and said I was waiting for him to sign it so I could take it back. That did it. He blew his top. 'Vot?' he said. 'Who said I should sign it?' I stammered that the legislature had passed it in a great hurry and sent me over forthwith, and I assumed they needed it as soon as practical. He got up and started pacing back and forth, talking about the prerogatives of the governor and the conduct of the legislature for lack of respect, etc., etc., all the time pacing around. I was scared I had upset the state government and tried to explain that I had made the mistake. I finally realized that the governor had ten days to sign bills into law, but it was no use trying to get his attention. He finally stopped ranting and I apologized and hustled away."

"I was too embarrassed to tell anyone about the blunder. A day or so later I saw an old personal friend, Ike Nash, who was still serving as land commissioner, and I related the experience. He assured me that was one of the governor's traits. He said he carried on that way when he went in to report or ask about matters in his work. He said he just said, 'Mose, when you are ready to discuss this matter, let me know. I'm not staying while you're acting like this.' That settled my concern about the matter and I soon thereafter got confidence to handle the job. I never did go to see the governor again during the session nor did I have much respect for him. I will say that I think of him as a good governor and a well meaning man. Nevertheless," concluded Porter, "he lost my interest to be cooperative."

Porter had to decide whether or not to run again for city council in 1917. Several political factions organized for the city campaign. Porter accepted the nomination to run for city council on the "Citizens Party" ticket. He and R. G. Archibald would run against Wilford Ricks and George R. Larsen, candidates from first precinct on the "People's Progressive Party" ticket, and L. G. Howell, candidate on the "Independent Progressive" ticket. Having W. Lloyd Adams and Albert Heath stump for the Citizens Party certainly helped that party. The campaign

centered around themes of protecting local morality and conservative government. Also, community unity was stressed as the nation had gone to war on April 6, 1917, when President Wilson signed the Declaration of War.

The *Current Journal* proffered information stating that the Citizens Party "ticket was nominated by a body of men who have the best interest[s] of the community at heart, with no personal ambitions other than for the general good. It is the best ticket we have seen nominated since coming to Rexburg. The old and the young are represented and what it takes to give good sane government. The people elected are the representatives of the people to handle our money, and we should be concerned as to who has that responsibility. Do we want our taxes to keep climbing up or do we want a sane, progressive government. We will leave that to the people to judge on election day. Do you have confidence in these men? If you do, vote for them and you will be voting for a steady, conservative growth for Rexburg."

The election was held on Tuesday, April 24, and the Citizens Party won every office. In the first precinct, Archibald had 485 votes; Porter had 432. "The defeated candidates," wrote a newspaper reporter, "accept the decision of the public smilingly."

The new administration was sworn in on May 3. Porter was appointed chairman of the law and order and sanitation committees. He was also appointed to the water works, irrigation and cemetery committees.

As chairman of the law and order committee, Porter had to deal with a problem created when Seventh Day Adventists asked for relief from the Sunday work law. Porter, on behalf of the law and order committee, issued the following: "With reference to modification of the Sunday rest law, as requested by the Seventh Day Adventists, we recommend no change in the law and suggest that labor in conspicuous places on Sunday be not permitted except in cases of emergency and then only by permission and under surveillance of the police department." The report was adopted by the council.

Pool halls again became an issue in late 1917. There was a widely held notion that pool halls interfered with the war effort by encouraging slackers. To see that pool halls were strictly regulated, the city council enacted Ordinance No. 214, September 19, raising the

license fee on pool halls to \$500 per quarter, and placed restrictions on hours they could be open. This was done in spite of the fact that F. D. Turner, representing the Commercial Club, was present and his stating that the club was almost unanimously opposed to the ordinance. He presented a petition signed by eighty-seven who opposed the action. The council did allow the date for the ordinance to take effect to be moved from November 1 to February 1, 1918. Voting for the ordinance were Archibald, Flamm, and Porter; voting against were Wright, Winter, and Harris. Since a tie vote was created, Mayor Ricks voted yes and the ordinance was then declared passed. The ordinance specified that pool or billiards could only be played between 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. each day except Sunday when no playing was allowed. Furthermore, no more than eight tables could be in any one establishment. Certainly, nobody could misinterpret the intention of the city council when they placed a \$500 per quarter license fee on pool halls. The prohibitive fee was designed to run pool halls out of business.

While adult attention was diverted to war efforts, some of the younger set found that, by cutting off part of the muffler of the family car, a marvelously loud noise could be made. All the noise did was direct adult attention back to the younger set and complaint was made to the city council. They decided that motor vehicle Ordinance No. 186, enacted in 1915, could be construed as covering a public disturbance like loud mufflers, and the police chief was directed to correct the situation or institute legal action against offenders. That solved the loud muffler problem. But other driving problems came to the council's attention. At the January 23, 1918, meeting, "Porter reported fast driving and 'cutting shines' on Main Street about which there had been much complaint. The police, on being asked, stated that an effort had been made to enforce the curfew law, but they were not aware of the matters complained of. The councilmen expressed themselves strongly in favor of enforcement of the law, and Mayor Ricks ordered the police to carry out a strong policy in this matter." Presumably, if enforcement of the curfew law was increased, "fast driving" and "cutting shines" would be curtailed by light of day.

Porter was involved in many responsibilities during World War I which necessitated occasional absences from city council meetings. But

he did not neglect his responsibilities on the council. He introduced a resolution April 24, 1918, "that all poles of telephone or electric lines on Main Street between Third West Street and Third East Street . . . be removed at once and that the companies owning such poles be given immediate notice to that effect. Carried unanimously." Also, Porter moved, seconded by Wright, "that the city adopt and authorize the installation of the automatic sprinkling system for the street parks of the city. Carried." Furthermore, he was diligent in seeing that city water tax laws were enforced. He made a motion, seconded by Wright, "that the city water to the homes of Fred Klingler and Emmett Poole be shut off until they comply with the city ordinance. Carried."

As a patriotic gesture, a local committee raised funds to erect a flag pole at a conspicuous spot in the city. The intersection of Main Street and College Avenue was chosen. Petitions were signed and presented to the city council July 22 asking permission to place the "Liberty Flag Pole" at the intersection. "Moved by Wright, seconded by Porter, that the petition be granted without cost to the city" was the motion carried. The pole was erected and "Old Glory" had a prominent place in town.

Late in August 1918, Porter led the opposition to the Riverside Rooming House which was in a dilapidated condition. Porter and Archibald notified the mayor and councilmen that they desired a special city council meeting to discuss declaring the roominghouse a public nuisance. Furthermore, they directed the police chief to notify Jed Arnold, owner of the property, and former owner, H. R. Jacket, to be present at the meeting held August 28. Arnold was present but Jacket did not show. The matter was deferred until September 28 and the "clerk was authorized to send notice of said meeting by registered letter to H. R. Jacket of Idaho Falls." At the September 18 meeting, city attorney Henry Adams indicated that Jacket had responded to the letter with a letter of his own stating he was no longer liable for the appearance of the property he had sold. The council agreed. Arnold agreed to rectify the situation and the matter was pursued no further.

As if stress of war was not enough, an especially virulent influenza epidemic swept the nation. In a somewhat futile attempt to protect Rexburg, the council instructed the mayor and city physician to take whatever action they deemed necessary to stop the disease's spread. Porter moved "that a strict quarantine be maintained against the

traveling public entering the city and that the mayor appoint as many special police as necessary to enforce the quarantine." The council agreed with the necessity of quarantining those coming into the city. Still, the disease took its toll in Rexburg.

Porter did not run for city council again in 1919. Perhaps he was influenced by the fact that Democrats had not fared well in the 1918 state and national election. During his tenure on the council, he was always careful to see that the city received full value for its tax money. He was diligent in seeing existing ordinances scrupulously enforced and ordinances drawn up and adopted to cover new situations. Several local improvement districts had been created and cement sidewalks were the norm in the city by 1919. He was directly involved with their passage. He had to look back over his years on the city council as productive and satisfying years. He remained active, of course, in Democratic Party politics and was always ready to lend his prestige to a campaign for local and state Democratic Party candidates.

9

Mayor

First Term

1929-1931

The timing seemed just right for Porter to “throw his hat in the ring” and run for mayor. He consulted with friends in both the Democratic and Republican party ranks as well as LDS and non-LDS and was encouraged to make the race. Porter was confident, he said, “that it would be a good time to demonstrate my ability to run the city.”

On April 3, 1929, petitions were filed with City Clerk James Blake submitting the following nominations for city offices: “For mayor, Peter Mickelsen; for clerk, Peter Taylor; for treasurer, D. H. Manwaring; for councilmen first ward, Jack Rogers and Robert Middleton; for councilmen second ward, Frank Kelley and R. G. Herdti; for councilmen third ward, F. L. Erdman and D. William Stowell.” About a week later the non-partisan “Citizens Progressive” ticket was filed nominating “for mayor, Arthur Porter; city clerk, James Blake; treasurer, Mrs. Jessie Archibald Atkinson; councilmen first ward, William Wheelwright and James S. Webster; second ward, Alma Klingler and Frank Pratt; third ward, Oswald Christensen and Thomas Richman.” Apparently the campaign could now get underway in earnest.

However, “on Monday, April 15, C. L. Hillman filed suit against James Blake as city clerk with intention of preventing the clerk from

having the following names appear on the ballot for the coming city election: Arthur Porter for mayor, James Blake for city clerk, Mrs. Jessie Archibald Atkinson for city treasurer, William H. Wheelwright and James S. Webster for councilmen in the first ward." This caused a delay in Porter's campaign while the case was heard in district court in Idaho Falls on Wednesday, April 17, "before Judge Robert M. Terrell of Pocatello. Attorneys Poole and Soelberg for the defendants interposed a demurrer to the complaint and to the order to show cause, and the judge sustained the demurrer. The order to show cause was denied and the entire case dismissed."

The court case was held only six days before the election. The legal delay may have spelled defeat for Porter except that the opposition was having problems of its own. Peter Mickelsen resigned as the mayoral candidate. He was replaced by L. Y. Rigby who had no more time to campaign than did Porter. Actually, the attention focused on Porter and his ticket by the lawsuit and its conclusion may have resulted in some votes for Porter from those who viewed the lawsuit as harassment and uncalled for.

Tuesday, April 23, the city election was held. Porter was elected mayor by a margin of 90 votes out of 864 cast. He was elated but recognized he would have immediate problems. Only two of the councilmen candidates running with him were elected: James S. Webster and Thomas Richman. The opposition had four councilmen elected: Jack Rogers, Frank Kelley, R. G. Herdti, and F. L. Erdman. This meant that the opposition could control the council if they wished. They were given the nickname of the "Four Horsemen." Porter noted that "people looked at the results and advised me to resign." He was not intimidated and quickly demonstrated that fact.

The Four Horsemen had decided how the council should be organized and who should be appointed to various city offices and had submitted their list to the mayor. The mayor called an unofficial dinner meeting at the Idamont Hotel and gave each councilman a list designating committee assignments and his choices for appointive offices. At that point no opposition was raised. That would change at the first official council meeting held May 1. Mayor Porter, shortly after the new council took the oath of office, made committee assignments and appointed councilmen to the chairmanship of various committees. So

far so good. Next, the mayor asked for confirmation of his choices for appointive offices. He started by appointing those whom he knew would not encounter opposition. He left the chief of police appointment until last because he knew there would be opposition. The Four Horsemen had decided that that position should go to Peter Parks. When the mayor appointed Marion G. Hacking, they said they could not support him. The mayor had already received an agreement from Hacking to accept the appointment. Hacking had been the deputy sheriff for some time and was qualified for the position of chief of police. When opposition was voiced, the mayor simply informed those opposed that their support was not necessary. "I explained," he said, "that I understood I was the executive whereas their responsibility consisted of considering and voting on questions, petitions, ordinances, bills coming before the council. I told them that the meeting was adjourned."

Peter Parks and the four councilmen held a quick conference; then Parks approached the mayor to see why he had not been appointed. Mayor Porter "reminded him that he had recently completed a term in the county jail as a law breaker and bootlegger which disqualified him from holding that office."

Within the next day or two, the four councilmen consulted an attorney about their majority rights in the council and found they had none as far as appointments were concerned. Appointments were the prerogative of the mayor.

At the next council meeting, the mayor noted that "I never referred to the selection. At last they asked what I was going to do about the appointment of chief of police. I answered by saying: 'I have appointed Marion Hacking.' They agreed on the appointment and the matter was settled, and I was acknowledged as the mayor." Porter would later exclaim that "they became my loyal supporters. I still believe this city council, all six of them, was one of the best in the history of the city."

The loyal support was not going to be a reality for a while at least. The Four Horsemen had campaigned on the Sunday showing of movies issue. They acknowledged that, if elected, they would support the showing of movies on Sunday. Porter, of course, was adamantly opposed to the notion. Others had tried to get previous city councils to allow Sunday movies, but strong opposition had come from the

religious community. Times change and, at the city council meeting May 16, 1919, Councilman Rogers presented a petition signed by Hugh Drennen and Paul DeMordaunt, the theater owners, and over eight hundred others asking the council to approve opening the theater for Sunday movie showing. The owners of the theater argued that a substantial number of Rexburg's citizens were driving to neighboring towns to see Sunday movies. This took dollars out of the community. Furthermore, Drennen and DeMordaunt promised to equip the Rex Theatre with the finest sound system available and make the theater one of the finest in the Upper Snake River Valley. The only action taken at the council meeting was to refer the matter to the judiciary committee. There was no doubt what disposition of the petition would be recommended by the judiciary committee. Rogers was chairman of the committee.

The major item of business at the May 22 meeting was the report of the judiciary committee on the movie issue. Rogers gave the committee report and recommended allowing the Sunday showing of movies and that an ordinance be drawn allowing the Sunday movies. Erdman moved, seconded by Kelley, that the report of the judiciary committee be adopted. After some debate the vote was taken. The Four Horsemen voted "aye;" Richman and Webster voted "nay." The motion passed. Rogers then introduced Ordinance No. 297 which provided for the opening and operation of movie theaters on Sunday. A special meeting of the council was called on May 23 for the second reading of the ordinance. The next day, May 24, in adjourned session, the ordinance was read for the required third time. Rogers moved, Erdman seconded, that the ordinance pass. Herdti, Kelley, Rogers, and Erdman voted yes. Richman voted no. Webster was absent.

At the city council meeting on June 5, the mayor surprised no one by vetoing Ordinance No. 297. The mayor clearly spelled out his reasons in his veto message:

MAYOR'S VETO MESSAGE ON ORDINANCE NO. 297

City Councilmen
Rexburg, Idaho

Gentlemen:

I am returning to you Ordinance No. 297 without my approval and desire to respectfully report herewith my decision to veto the said ordinance on the following grounds:

1. The subject matter involved therein has been acted upon by the city council within the past two years, namely, in July and August of last year, making it out of order to give it consideration again at this time.
2. The petition on which the council acted in passing Ordinance No. 297 does not actually comply with the intent of the statute on which it is based.
3. Said petition does not represent present public sentiment, and there is no other petition in possession of the city representing present public sentiment with reference to Sunday picture shows excepting the one filed in opposition to the opening of Sunday shows.
4. The expression of the public opinion of Rexburg with reference to Sunday picture shows, registered at an election on the question held August 3 of last year, was against such opening. There is no evidence of any change of sentiment favorable since then.
5. The petition on which Ordinance No. 297 was enacted was a petition originally addressed to other officers than the present and represents a different situation.

I quote herewith the statute:

Chapter 238

Amending Section 8293 of the Compiled Statutes of the State of Idaho
Relating to the Closing of Public Amusements on Sunday.

Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

SECTION 1. That Section 8293 of the Compiled Statutes of the State of Idaho be and same is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 8293. It shall be unlawful for any person or persons in this state to keep open (on Sunday) any theater, moving picture show, playhouse, dance house, race track, merry-go-round, circus or show, concert, saloon, billiard or pool room, bowling alley or variety hall. PROVIDED, however, that if a number of the qualified electors residing within the limits of any incorporated city or village equal to a majority of the votes cast at the last general election therein shall petition the council or board of trustees of such city or village to permit theaters or moving picture shows to keep open on Sunday there, such council or board of trustees may pass an ordinance permitting theaters and moving picture shows to keep open on Sunday in such city or village during such hours and subject to such regulations as may be prescribed in such ordinance. PROVIDED, further, that the method herein prescribed authorizing the keeping open of theaters and moving picture shows on Sunday may be employed in authorizing the closing of the same, but petitions upon the subject matter shall not be considered oftener than two years by the council or board of trustees.

Any person or persons violating this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, on conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than \$30 nor more than \$250 for each offense and shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed ninety days and upon a second conviction, any license which may have been granted for opening and maintaining any such place of business shall also be rendered void and shall not be renewed within two years next thereafter.

Approved March 14, 1921.

The statute clearly prohibits the opening of Sunday shows except on specific conditions which have not been satisfactorily complied with [continued Mayor Porter].

The foregoing statements are further argued hereinafter:

1st — A petition asking Mayor Mickelsen and council to pass an ordinance opening picture shows on Sunday was circulated in Rexburg a year ago. Concurrent therewith a counter petition was circulated asking the council not to allow Sunday shows. When the matter came to the attention of the mayor and council, it was known that the names of some signers appeared on both petitions. Other conditions also left the officials in doubt as to public sentiment. An agreement was, therefore, made whereby the mayor and council called an election on the question, the picture show interests agreeing to pay the expense thereof. In the event the election resulted in favor of Sunday shows, the council was expected to take favorable action on the petition. If the election resulted adversely to Sunday shows, the picture show interests were to abide the decision patiently and not present their petition. The election is a matter of history, registering a majority vote

against Sunday shows, and, as a result, the petition was not filed with the council. The special election above referred to was supposed to have conclusively settled the question so far as this effort was concerned and, in fairness to all parties, should have remained so for the period of two years as provided in the statute.

2nd – The petition for Sunday shows above referred to, however, was carefully preserved by the show interests and was filed with the city council at their meeting of May 15, 1929. It was duly referred to the judiciary committee and, on investigation, found to be the same petition of a year ago with some names recently added. It was on this petition that Ordinance No. 297 was enacted by a majority of the council – being opposed by two members. There can be no doubt that, in the public mind, this petition had been acted on last August when the election was held. Any reasonable interpretation of the law would place it in that category, and, in justice to public opinion, it deserves that consideration. As a matter of fact, the counter petition signed at the same time, was regarded as having served its purpose and the occasion and was disposed of. No matter what technical arguments are urged, this petition does not comply with the intent of the statute.

3rd – The above mentioned petition does not represent present public sentiment. When filed, it purported to contain approximately eight hundred signatures of qualified electors asking for the opening of picture shows on Sunday. The judiciary committee checked off approximately two hundred names as not being eligible for the following reasons: many had since moved from the city, one or two had died, quite a number were minors, a number were voters in precincts outside of Rexburg, some were duplications. Meanwhile, some of the remaining six hundred signatures were known to have changed their views and were now against the Sunday shows. In fact, a petition recently signed opposing Sunday shows, was filed with the council on the evening of May 22 and on which a number of the petitioners of a year ago were now signed.

4th – The election held on the third day of last August to determine the public wish on opening Sunday shows in Rexburg resulted in a public decision against such opening. It was so accepted at the time by the council and by the picture show interests. There is no evidence that sentiment has changed in favor of Sunday shows since then. In fact, there are plain indications to the contrary in the fact that some [who] were formerly in favor of Sunday shows are now known to be opposed thereto. Indeed, it seems probable that the reason that the parties desiring Sunday shows have not come forward with a new petition is because, when they attempted to secure one recently, they found sentiment to be adverse.

5th – As a further argument that the said petition does not comply with the intent of the statute or represent present public opinion, attention is called to the fact that it was intended for presentation to and signed for

a different administration, namely, Mayor Mickelsen and council of a year ago. The officers of the former administration gave it such thorough attention as to actually call and hold an election on the question and were guided by the vote of the people in the disposition of the matter. A new petition representing later sentiment on the matter should appear before it can properly be acted upon by the present administration.

In conclusion, the foregoing argument is based chiefly on the regularity of the procedure by which Ordinance No. 297 was enacted.

There remains another phase of the situation that might well receive the consideration of the council. The settlers of Rexburg were a particularly religious people and had a deeply established feeling of reverence for the Sabbath Day. This was a condition very general in the state, giving rise to the enactment of Statute 8293 quoted above expressly prohibiting shows and theaters to be operated on Sunday. Ordinance No. 297 undertakes the establishment of a practice entirely at variance with this sentiment with reference to the Sabbath Day. The institution of Sunday shows will be abhorrent and an offense to the feelings of this group, and this undoubtedly represents a very large part of our citizens. A very important change in our community life and traditions is being affected by this enactment. For these and other considerations above referred to, the mayor feels that he is right in urging the council to require a more definite expression of present public sentiment on this question — at least a new petition drawn and signed since the last election.

Respectfully submitted at the regular meeting of the city council, June 5, 1929.

Arthur Porter
Mayor of Rexburg

The council voted to carry any discussion of the mayor's veto over to the next regular meeting. That meeting was held on June 19. With little discussion about the merits of the veto message with its reference to a state statute, previous city administration's handling of the problem, the unusual — if not illegal — presentation of a faulty petition to the present administration, and the religious heritage of the community with all that implied for the Sabbath Day, it was "moved by Rogers, seconded by Erdman, that Ordinance No. 297 now be passed notwithstanding the mayor's veto. Voting aye: Rogers, Herdti, Kelley, and Erdman. Voting nay: Richman and Webster." The two-thirds vote necessary to pass over the mayor's veto being recorded, Ordinance No. 297 was enacted without the mayor's signature and in force immediately. The ordinance allowed movies to be shown on

Sundays between the hours of 2:00 and 11:30 p.m. However, there was to be no "vaudeville or musical comedy on Sunday" or "any picture, show, play, drama, vaudeville, lecture, rehearsal, or entertainment of any kind of an indecent or immoral nature within said city at any time." A fine of \$100 was affixed for violating the ordinance. The mayor later took some satisfaction in the fact that he had written the longest veto message in Rexburg's history.

Mayor Porter may have been disappointed with the council on the Sunday movie issue, but already the council had demonstrated their support for the mayor on several issues including improving the physical appearance of the city, cleaning up the city cemetery, beginning the process of building a fourth-class airport on the hill south of the city, and protecting city water rights in the Teton River.

Mayor Porter turned his attention to some of the ceremonial duties attendant to his office. On June 21 the *Rexburg Journal* noted that the "Goodrich Silver Fleet, probably the most spectacular motor cavalcade that ever tackled the highways and by-ways of the nation, swept into Rexburg just four months and twenty-one days after they weighed anchor and started their long journey from New York's City Hall." The Silver Fleet was "composed of fourteen different makes of automobiles and one huge baggage truck." In keeping with the naval fleet image, the automobiles proceeded "in single column formation like a squadron of fast destroyers with a bone in their teeth; the fifteen trim gleaming silvercrafts gracefully came to their anchorage in Rexburg in company formation on Main Street in front of the Taylor Auto Service Company." Whereupon "the officer of the deck stepped out and, as the last car came into position, three blasts were sounded and the spic and span pilots stepped out and hurriedly formed a line at a set position." Next, "the fleet commander, H. R. Shaeffer, stepped forward with the big grey book which contains the good will message that the people of the west are sending to the people of the east. After formal introduction, Mayor Arthur Porter affixed his signature, thereby placing Rexburg on the official record." With the mayor's greeting and signature in the book, he joined some 165 other mayors in whose towns the fleet had dropped anchor. After the ceremonies, the entire party met at the Idamont Hotel for dinner.

The mayor had official duties in relation to the annual Whoopee Days celebration July 2-4, 1929. The city council had agreed to allow small firecrackers to be sold for the event "provided those indulging in their use do not explode them in crowds, near parked automobiles or teams, nor disturb public assemblies or create fire hazards. The police were instructed to check their reckless use." Approximately fifteen thousand people attended the three-day event. "With all the enthusiasm and holiday spirit abroad, there was very little disorder and that was promptly dealt with." Mayor Porter had officially opened the festivities when he crowned Miss Belva Jensen of Salem "queen of the carnival" and Miss Terue Tarazawa "queen of the Japanese carnival" on the evening of July 2. The flagpole on Main Street provided the backdrop for the opening address by the mayor:

It seems a great honor and blessing to us all to assemble under auspicious circumstances in the golden sunset of a glorious summer day to open a great festival that is undertaken in commemoration of one of the greatest events in human history — our country's birthday. As chief executive of the City of Rexburg, it becomes my happy duty to pronounce the "Whoopee" celebration at Rexburg officially opened, to bid our visitors a hearty welcome, and to crown the queens of the carnival.

People of Rexburg are glad of an opportunity of advertising their city and surroundings. This is a place of broad and rich acres and fields of golden plenty, of fine water in ample supply, of cool nights and invigorating air, of law abiding patriotic citizens. We are proud of our pioneer forebearers, proud of our institutions and of our history, proud of our boys and girls — our future citizens.

We extend to our neighbors and visitors a hearty welcome. May your visit with us be filled with happy memories causing you soon to return and to long to make your home with us. We want you to feel that you are the "welcome guests." Our streets and parks and fountains of pure water are yours. Our public buildings and utilities are open to you. The music of the bands, gay lights, noise of the carnival, and cheer and enthusiasm of merry-makers and boosters (including red shirts) [all Rexburg boosters were required to wear red shirts during Whoopee Day celebrations] are calculated to warm our hearts and drive away dull care and unfriendliness.

The key of the city is delivered to our guests. Parking rules will not be too strictly enforced. You can shoot firecrackers if they are small ones and if it is done without harming yourselves or others. Do not shoot them in the crowd or hold them in hand. We ask that no firecrackers or explosives be discharged along the line of march of the great patriotic parade on July 4.

Officers and committeemen are at your service to assist in arranging for your comfort and also in preventing accidents.

It is a pleasure to officiate in presenting and crowning the queens of this carnival — Belva Jensen of Salem and Terue Tarazawa of Sugar City. The Japanese Society is contributing a valuable part to this festival, therefore, the beautiful queen Terue, of their choosing. These young ladies are the choice of the vote of the people of the county, the patrons of the rodeo, and those who trade at the local stores. They are splendid representatives of our youth. They have been reared and educated in the institutions of the county — our high schools and Ricks College. The crowns and robes are prepared to do justice to the great occasion. It is a pleasure to confer this honor — the award of public affection.

In the interest of safety and that the pleasure of all may be the greater, attention is called to the need of respecting rights and comforts of others. Means are provided to protect the public against those who would violate the laws of good citizenship and to check disorderly or reckless conduct. Boy Scouts are assisting the officers and committee in preventing accidents or evil from these sources. But better than all, an appeal is made to all our citizens — much as was done to the youth of Athens in the day of that city's highest virtue and valor — "to help make our city better and more beautiful than we found it." May the hope of the committee be realized that this celebration may be a step in the direction of building a greater Rexburg.

As we stand here tonight in the presence of the flag of our country on the eve of commemorating the birthday of our nation and the meaning of the stars and stripes, we can do no better than to subscribe to the Boy Scout pledge and oath [of allegiance] paraphrased to fit this occasion: "We pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands; one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." "On our honor we will do our best — first, to do our duty to God and our country and to obey the Scout Law; second, to help other people at all times; third, to keep ourselves physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The Whoopee celebration at Rexburg is now formally open. May we all enjoy this visit and festival occasion together in peace and fellowship and goodwill — free of accident or any harm. Let us be young with the merry heart of youth — and this without staining our souls — that our lives may not be blighted or reputations injured and later years made unhappy by evil practices or excesses now or at any time.

Queens Belva and Terue will rule at the carnivals. I salute them and commend you to their grace. As they are beautiful, they are good. You may rely on their advice, their kindness, and good will.

The mayor's speech, as well as that of Senator Adams on the fourth, were printed in their respective newspapers as the crowds were

so large everyone could not hear the addresses. This prompted Porter to note: "As may well be supposed, these two editors are disregarding their native modesty in publishing their own speeches."

The celebration included a parade with Senator James Whaley Webster as marshall, three different bands, a daily rodeo, a 49er dance, and, to set the proper mood, red, white, and blue street lighting. Culmination of the festivities was the patriotic program held in the tabernacle the evening of July 4. Mayor Porter presided and introduced the orator, Senator W. Lloyd Adams, who thrilled the audience with his "stirring address" which "drew frequent applause."

The mayor and city council busied themselves with routine matters: setting hours for lawn sprinkling; appropriating money for the public library; ordering seams in the pavement tarred; and announcing a get-tough policy in regard to stray dogs. Ordinance No. 299 was enacted which extended city fire limits on Main Street and College Avenue. Ordinance No. 300 abolished sidewalk and street obstructions in the downtown area. That included gas pumps next to the street. The city bought a new Ford Roadster which was lettered "City of Rexburg Police Department." The automobile was to be used only for city business within the city limits unless otherwise authorized by the mayor.

On September 11 a mass meeting, called by the Chamber of Commerce, was held at the courthouse to discuss the "delinquent tax problem." Those who neglected to pay property taxes created a greater burden on those who did. Mayor Porter explained how public finances were affected by delinquent taxes. Public sentiment was clearly in favor of selling property on which taxes were delinquent at public auction with the return "pro-rated to the county, city, and school district according to their interest."

Mayor Porter gave official welcome to the "Ogden good willers" who arrived September 18 in Rexburg at the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce. A dinner and meeting were held in the Idamont Hotel. "The whole meeting was a creditable and enthusiastic affair and gave the visitors an effective impression of the progressivism and energy of this community."

Friday, October 11, over six hundred teachers of District 6 of the Idaho Education Association attended an institute on the college

campus. The mayor gave an address of welcome. He could speak directly to problems of education because of his background and was respected as an expert.

On November 20 the mayor and city council decided that the flagpole on Main Street was creating a traffic hazard and needed to be removed. Having been there over ten years, the flagpole was missed when removed.

In a public announcement, the mayor promoted the Christmas Seal sale. Money raised was used to aid those afflicted with tuberculosis. "We may feel assured that money given to this cause will be employed wisely to relieve suffering among unfortunate fellow beings," proclaimed the mayor, "and to prevent the spread of this disease among our own kindred and neighbors. The organization also conducts a fine health program for school children." The mayor heartily approved the appointment of Mrs. Elizabeth Stowell as county chairman.

Mayor Porter spent much of his time in the early months of 1930 handling routine business in city council meetings. He participated in several community functions, usually as a speaker. Tuesday, February 11, he joined Idaho Governor Baldridge at the opening session of the Ricks College sponsored Leadership Week held in the tabernacle. Porter gave a brief welcoming address, then turned the time to the governor for a more lengthy speech.

In his welcoming speech, Mayor Porter included an assessment of Ricks College:

I embrace this opportunity to refer to the work of Ricks College. Whatever may be the future of the noble institution that has fostered these leadership programs amongst us, it is safe to say that the influence of Ricks College for uplift in this part of Idaho has been far beyond measure, and it has implanted amongst us energizing principles of progress and growth that will bear fruit for generations. It is a worthwhile investment, and it is endeared beyond price in the hearts of those who appreciate its work and love it for its continuing blessing.

After all, it is not the fact that mathematics or English or science was so well taught — but that a character was built and placed in the world that did not use tobacco or intoxicating drink — and one with a knowledge of and faith in the gospel of Christ.

The city joined with Ricks College on March 7 "in one of the most rousing homecoming celebrations that Rexburg has seen in many a day. The affair was in honor of the Ricks College basketball team upon its return from a victorious conquest of the junior colleges of Utah and Idaho." Ceremonies were held on the college campus. The mayor gave a welcoming speech and also "offered the key of the city to the high school teams who are to engage in the high school tournament here this week."

The mayor was featured speaker at the March 13 Rotary Club luncheon. He informed members about a proposal to create a cemetery district and use tax revenue generated by that district to install a pump for sprinkling purposes as well as other improvements. "On motion of R. J. Comstock, the organization went on record for a hearty endorsement of the project."

March 14 found the mayor responding to the topic, "Our Community Needs," at a meeting of a women's club. One need about which he spoke was the graveling of some city streets. The mayor anticipated that, when the paved highway being built north from Idaho Falls reached Rexburg in a few weeks, Main Street would be ready to be paved.

Mayor Porter gave an address of welcome to alumni of Brigham Young College [of Logan] meeting March 28 on Ricks College's campus. He was especially pleased to note that "alumni of the Brigham Young College, residing in Idaho, at their meeting recently at Idaho Falls decided to adopt the Ricks College to foster and transfer their spirit and loyalty to the building up and permanent maintenance of this church school." The alumni's visit "and their enthusiasm was a great encouragement and stimulation to Ricks College students and supporters. They were given a hearty welcome and applause."

The mayor was especially particular about the appearance of the city and, not only proclaimed a clean-up day in April 1930, but he participated. He planted trees, flowers, and shrubs. The community was well aware of the mayor's predilection for trees and flowers. The following bit of doggerel appeared in the *Rexburg Journal*, April 4, 1930:

THE MAYOR'S DREAM

Ye citizens, it would surely seem
Our mayor has had quite a dream.
He dreamt he died, was laid away
To rest, until the judgment day.
The day dawned bright and very clear
Mr. Porter 'rose and felt quite queer
As he stood upon the firmament,
He was in quite a predicament,
As were the other males standing round.
(You know they are to be the first
To come again from out the ground.)

He said, "You see, it would be a disgrace
To call our wives to such a place.
We must rustle now with might and main
Get some timber, build a drain;
Plant some trees, some shrubs, some flowers,
Get a pump and spray this land of ours."

Then he scratched his head and whispered low,
"We will have to wait for them to grow.
We will have to work, yes, indeed,
To do away with the beastly weeds;
And all this time we will be alone
Without a wife, a babe, a home,
But really, I haven't got the crust
To call them up out of the dust."

He heaved a sigh, let out a groan
And thought he heard the others moan
So loud. He jumped out of the bed
And found he never had been dead.

Now dear folks, I surely feel
We should put our shoulders to the wheel.
So let's get busy, I and you,
And help to push this project through.
For even Satan's business would bust
Without some help from the rest of us.

— Mary D. B.

During the afternoon of April 14, the mayor attended the county commission meeting and "presented a petition for the creation of a cemetery district," one of his high priority projects. The commission agreed to hold a hearing on the matter on May 12 and instructed Porter to publish a notice of the hearing. The hearing was held at 2:00 p.m. on May 12. There was some opposition to the boundaries for the district as stated in the petition. The commission decided to continue the hearing on May 15 to hear from other interested parties. At the May 15 meeting, the commission decided to grant the mayor's petition with some acceptable modifications. The mayor was satisfied when an election was held on June 10, and the Rexburg Cemetery Maintenance District passed by a vote of 231 to 16.

The mayor gave a congratulatory talk at a reception for Madison High School students during the evening of April 14. He honored students who had brought district and state championships to the school. The school had won the state basketball championship under Lowell Biddulph's coaching. They earned the right to go to Chicago to play in a tournament there. The school debate team won the state championship with several individual district and state champions.

At the city council meeting on May 7, a decision was made to "give notice of intention to create Improvement District No. 13 for paving the strip of sidewalk on each side of Main Street from the curb to the present pavement; also to include the paving of a sidewalk on the west side of Third East Street from Second North Street north to the canal." The local improvement district would become official with Ordinance No. 303 on July 21. To improve parking on Main Street, the council approved marking the street for diagonal parking. It would take a while before drivers became accustomed to the fact that backing out without looking was hazardous to their well-being — not to mention the well-being of those who happened to get in the way.

The mayor had the honor of being in attendance, along with other dignitaries, at the first Madison High School commencement exercises held in the tabernacle on May 22, 1930. The whole community was proud of the class and proud to be part of a progressive school district.

Mayor Porter took time from official duties to reaffirm his allegiance to the Democratic Party when he attended the party convention at the Madison County Courthouse on August 19. The

convention endorsed the candidacy of C. Ben Ross for governor. Porter was chosen as a delegate to the state convention to be held in St. Anthony on August 26. There he endorsed the party platform and spoke in favor of C. Ben Ross who would be elected governor in the November election.

At the October 1 meeting of the city council, Marion Hacking, who had resigned as chief of police, was replaced by the mayor who appointed J. R. Clarke. Also at that meeting, a decision was made to plant grass and otherwise beautify the area north of City Hall on Center Street.

Looking at 1930, the mayor was pleased with the accomplishments of his administration. A cemetery district had been created and money was available to improve the grounds as soon as weather permitted in the spring. Especially gratifying to the mayor was the work done in the city park "clearing and planting one-fourth of the area. Water mains were laid, lawns planted, walks outlined and graveled, and hardwood trees and shrubs planted. It was well cared for and, before the season was through, was a beauty spot that attracted the attention of everyone passing along the highway."

The city park would continue to get much attention from Porter during his tenure as mayor. In his "Autobiography," Porter delineated his involvement with the city park project:

At a [church] conference meeting, I heard the Relief Society leader speak about the disgusting condition of city park so [I] decided to try to make a project of it. The park had been planted with poplars which proved to be cotton bearing. Irrigation was also unsatisfactory. Cotton covered the grass; dust blew in and the place was filthy to walk in.

I visited parks in Salt Lake City and elsewhere and devised a plan for a new design and planting. I had, formerly, as a boy, worked in a nursery at Logan. The council decided to adopt the plan. We decided to root up the trees and plow up and re-level the east half to begin. Ken Webster agreed to remove the trees for \$250 which we paid out of city funds. Most of the leveling was paid out of relief funds to men we had to find work for. I wrote the state nursery and got plenty of shade trees of a better quality. These were free. They had maple, ash, locusts, some birches, Russian olives, and pea trees available in ten or twelve sizes. The state was very cooperative and, at the time, had a pretty good selection suitable for public parks. We got plenty of evergreens of some varieties, but they were small.

I wrote to several nurseries and offered to sell them advertising space in the *Rexburg Journal* in exchange for nursery stock. I obtained different varieties in this way and donated them to the park. We bought lawn seed and planted lawns. The planting was done by relief labor. I got Alf Carlson to put in the sprinkling system. He donated much of the material also. He later contributed material and built some swings. He was very cooperative.

We built tennis courts, a wading pool, and rest rooms mostly with relief labor. We had to buy some cement out of city funds, also some pipe. Some funds for material were contributed by service clubs, etc. The Utah Power and Light Company contributed the services of their surveyor to locate points or boundary lines. I spent much time at the park supervising all planting.

Porter's determination to see a beautiful city park was, as Gene Shumate noted in a December 31, 1967, KRXX editorial, "decried by most citizens and considered an unnecessary luxury by some. Among the unkind names for it was Porter's Folly." But the mayor had a vision of what the park would look like given some judicious planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers. He had been favorably impressed with Salt Lake City's beautiful Pioneer Park and determined that the city park would be just as beautiful. His perseverance was finally rewarded when local citizens agreed that he had directed the conversion of a "civic eyesore into a city beauty spot."

In 1945 the Rexburg Lions Club had recommended that the city park be named in Porter's honor. Various city councils would discuss the recommendation from time to time over the next several years. Even a recommendation by the Rexburg Planning Board failed to hasten a council decision. When the ladies of the Civic Club sent a letter to the city council early in May 1952, more than twenty years after the creation of the modern park, the city council was galvanized into action. On Wednesday, May 22, "in recognition of his role as founder, instigator, and guiding force of Rexburg's modern city park," the council adopted and had proclaimed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The Rexburg City Park (block 46) was planned, promoted, and developed into the beautiful park that it now is through the efforts of Arthur Porter, Jr., while he served as mayor of the City of Rexburg,

WHEREAS, Civic groups, namely, the Rexburg Civic Club, the Lions Club, and the Rexburg Planning Board, have passed resolutions asking that special recognition be given for this contribution to our community.

THEREFORE, We, as mayor and city council of the City of Rexburg, do act this day to designate this area of city property to be known as "Arthur Porter, Jr., Park."

The park, known in abbreviated form as "Porter Park," was a fitting tribute to that farsighted business, political, religious, and civic leader. Porter was justly proud of the community accolade and gracious in his acknowledgement.

During Porter's first term as mayor, many streets were leveled and graveled. The highway through the city was paved, mostly at state expense. The route of the highway through town had been a perplexing problem for the previous administration and was not yet settled when Porter became mayor. He did not have a great amount of time to work on the problem as the highway was through Rigby early in 1930 and the highway department was pressuring his administration to get the right-of-way settled through town.

The Hyrum Ricks log home, still occupied by the widow Ricks, was situated on property, a corner of which was needed for the right-of-way. The property was located on the southwest edge of the city. The Ricks' wanted \$3,500 for the property. Porter agreed with the previous administration that that was about \$1,000 too high. He took it as a personal challenge to get the property on an equitable basis for all concerned.

"I had estimated that moving the house and paying the [\$800] mortgage would be approximately \$2,000," noted the mayor. "One morning when I went to see Mrs. Ricks she agreed to let me take the contract to move the house and put a cement cellar under it and put it in livable condition — put up a new fence, move her peony garden, pay the mortgage, and move a half grown evergreen tree so it would grow. I had a paper and pen and got everything down and signed. I started at once," he concluded. "It cost \$2,100. I completed everything I had agreed, also added improvements she hadn't thought of such as a foundation under the house, which it had not previously had, planted a lawn in front, resingled the house, improved the wiring and plumbing. I made it a project."

Early in 1931 the mayor traveled to Boise to attend the inauguration of C. Ben Ross as governor of Idaho. While there he attended a convention of Idaho mayors who met to discuss the problems cities

were having coping with difficult economic times. Also, while in Boise, Porter did some lobbying on the issue of getting the state to accept the physical plant of Ricks College and make it into a state junior college.

By 1931 the effects of the "Great Depression" were being felt in Rexburg. The mayor and city council tried to see that men had work by starting to gravel streets in January rather than wait until spring. Unemployment was still not a serious problem but having cash in pocket was. Most citizens still had fuel to burn and enough to eat and wear but the situation would get worse before it got better.

On March 20 Governor C. Ben Ross and Alvin Harbour, the state highway commissioner, stopped in Rexburg to see the mayor. They were inspecting the highway through the Upper Snake River Valley. The mayor and others were assured that travel between Rexburg and the Teton Basin would be facilitated with the building of a bridge across Canyon Creek that summer. The road to Canyon Creek would also be graveled.

Ordinance No. 308, enacted April 22, 1931, fixed the salaries of the mayor and councilmen for the coming fiscal year. The mayor was to be paid \$320 per year paid quarterly. Each councilman was to be paid \$160 per year paid quarterly. There was no public questioning of the amounts as the city was operated with financial integrity.

One problem confronting the mayor was the violation of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution occurring in the city. Bootlegging home brew was the most common violation. Late in March, Annie E. Arnold was arrested for the "manufacture and possession of liquor." Her house in the west part of town was searched, forty-four quarts of beer were confiscated, and fifteen gallons of mash were destroyed. "She was placed under a \$750 bond to await trial in the district or federal court."

Early in 1931 Porter was pleased to note that "many of the soft wood cotton-bearing trees have been cut down in the city this year." He recommended that hardwood trees such as white ash, Norway maple, sycamore maple, and Siberian elm be planted as soon as possible. He also recommended Norway spruce and Colorado blue spruce as good evergreens. The University of Idaho would provide hardwood trees and evergreens at a low price. "It would add to the beauty of the city if some system were followed in tree planting," editorialized the mayor in

the *Rexburg Journal* "It has been suggested that sidewalk planting on east and west streets be done with maples and north and south streets with ash. Shade trees should be fully thirty feet apart in order for the trees to grow into beautiful form." The large lot surrounding his home on East Main Street was an example of his love of beautiful trees and shrubs. The mayor's reputation as a horticulturist was well-founded and his advice was followed.



Art, Warren, Mary Nell



Arthur Porter, Jr.

10

Mayor

Second & Third Terms

1931-1935

In April 1931 Porter filed for another term as mayor. He had the happy circumstance of running unopposed. He garnered 739 votes. Five people got one vote each as write-in candidates.


The first thing the recently installed city officers did was to publish a notice that anyone having extra flowers, shrubs, or trees to plant might consider donating them to the city park where they would "become a pleasure to everybody."

With the national economic hard times, a steady increase of transients made their way into and through Rexburg on the freight trains. The number of "hobos" became a concern to many living along the railroad tracks. A Mr. Weber appeared before the city council on June 3 and expressed the concern of the "owners of property in the wholesale district on the railroad to see if more protection could be given them owing to the numerous hobos and transients following the railroads. These people," explained Mr. Weber, "felt that they were entitled to and desired more police protection and better lighting facilities." The mayor agreed that something needed to be done and assigned the problem to the committee on law and order. It would be an ongoing problem for several years.

While part of the citizenry worried about transients, another part worried about culture. The mayor was "empowered to present the sum of \$100 to the brass band organization of the city," to keep it operating during the summer months.

The mayor was not in Rexburg to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1931. He took his family on one of their infrequent vacations. The holiday was spent in Salmon, Idaho, visiting his daughter Louise Clarke and her family.

July and August were particularly dry months and the amount of water being used in the city was a cause of concern to the mayor and council. They were especially concerned when the pumping bill for July was over \$600. They issued a statement pointing out that carelessness with water would lead to a higher tax levy to pay for increased costs. "If anyone is letting his hose run all night or out of regular hours or watering the garden with the hose instead of by irrigation excepting when specially paid for, or letting water drip through leaky taps, toilets, etc., you are paying for this waste," they said. "If you know of any such wastes, they should be promptly reported. The council has authorized the superintendent of water works to promptly arrest and have fines imposed on all who violate these provisions. These parties should be made to pay for losses created by the waster," they concluded.



On Wednesday, September 16, the mayor was back in the capital city responding to a call from Governor Ross to Idaho mayors to meet to discuss the unemployment situation in the state and to decide on means to alleviate problems. A newspaper account of the meeting noted that "a score of Idaho mayors were present and decided that the best way to relieve unemployment is to provide jobs." One has to wonder how much debate occurred before the politicians arrived at that conclusion! Be that as it may, a resolution was adopted "providing for jobs both by public and private organizations and individuals; employment only for local labor; employment of one breadwinner in each family; the federal government be requested to complete projects already started or contemplated in Idaho; and that all individuals facing shortage of food make personal effort to secure part of the surplus of food in the state and seek aid of the municipalities in securing it when private efforts failed."

In October the city council responded to a problem created when the property tax was reduced from fifteen to ten mills per dollar of valuation. The amount the city would have to operate was thus reduced by one-third. To see that water users were careful with the city's water and paid their bills, Ordinance No. 309 was enacted October 26. The ordinance provided for installation of water meters and an increase of from twenty-five cents to forty cents per month in the basic water rate. However, if bills were paid by the tenth of the month, twenty-five cents would be subtracted from the bill. If the bill was not paid by the end of the month it was due, water was to be shut off. The ordinance provided a basic charge for, among other things, each house without an inside bathroom or toilet, \$1.50 per month; with an inside toilet or bathroom, \$2 per month; ten cents per animal for watering domestic animals; and one-half cent per square yard per month for sprinkling lawns or gardens.

Sensitive to the fact that, in times of stress, small pleasures can divert attention from troubles, the city officers on December 9 designated "Second East Street from Second South to Main Street for coasting. This is the street running south from the courthouse corner, past the pump house and up the hill. There is a good slope for nearly a quarter of a mile. The snow has been levelled down and stop signs are placed at the intersections. All drivers crossing this street are warned to stop before crossing to see that no coasters are approaching from the south. Children and others are warned against coasting on other streets. Those engaged in coasting on sleds or toboggans drawn by automobiles are warned to not drive on the highway through the city except as it may be necessary to cross. Before crossing, they must first stop and see that no vehicles are approaching from the left."

At the city council meeting January 6, 1932, the mayor and councilmen were confronted by a committee which had been appointed at a mass meeting of the city's taxpayers a few days earlier. The committee members, James W. Webster, Alma Larsen, and Peter J. Ricks, each spoke about the serious financial conditions (as if the mayor and councilmen were not aware of them) and "urged retrenchment in public expenditures where possible." The mayor demonstrated from city records that financial restraint had been practiced by his administration. He explained that there were some

contracted expenses that had to be met. Otherwise, the monies had been carefully expended. The mayor, although somewhat piqued at the not too subtle implication of financial extravagance by the "taxpayers committee," agreed to have the finance committee scrutinize city records again and see if further cuts could be made. That seemed to satisfy the taxpayers committee.

The recommendation of the finance committee was presented to the mayor and other councilmen at the meeting on April 14. The report was accepted by the council. By its terms, the mayor and councilmen would "voluntarily accept a twenty-five percent reduction in their salaries for the ensuing fiscal year beginning May 1, 1932, and that appointed officers for the ensuing year be subject to a ten percent reduction." That meant that the mayor's salary was reduced to \$60 per quarter. Each councilman was reduced from \$40 per quarter to \$30. The reduced salaries clearly indicated to the taxpaying public that the city officers were willing to make a personal sacrifice to help alleviate the financial situation.

The city council had already begun street graveling projects in order to put some money in the pockets of as many people as possible. Because of the large number of men wanting work, the city officials decided to hire two shifts of about fifty-five men each. Each shift would work only two days; then the project would have exhausted the \$500 allocated, but some 110 men would get a paycheck. Several men were hired to clean gutters and drains on College Avenue and Main Street after a violent blizzard on March 1 filled them with compacted snow.

Mayor Porter called the council into adjourned session April 21. The council decided that water from the city canal would be assessed at \$5 a share and \$2.50 a half share. If cash was not available to pay the assessment, a person could work one day on the canal for half a share and two days for a full share.

Sensing that 1932 would be a Democratic Party year on the national and state level, Madison County Democrats held a "rousing victory dinner" served by the Relief Society on May 4. The mayor was toastmaster for the festivities and "complimented the party on the character of men and women aspiring to office and asked for generous support by everybody at the general election to those candidates who

will be nominated at the primary election." Governor Ross was in attendance and spoke, receiving a "great ovation."

During the summer of 1932, as usual, water users were encouraged to pay their bills and to observe the rules regulating water usage. The water superintendent was again instructed to inspect fixtures and check for wastefulness. Mayor Porter optimistically predicted a savings of \$100 per month on pumping charges if the citizens were careful.

By September 1932, if the city's financial situation was not critical, it gave every indication of becoming so. The city council meeting of September 7 was occupied with trying to find more ways to reduce expenditures so the city would not end the fiscal year in the red. Several methods were accepted by the council to reduce expenditures: Utah Power & Light Company would be asked to reduce the number of street lights by one-third for a savings of \$1,500 per year; monthly billings would be mailed on postcards rather than sent by letter, saving \$100 a year in postage; the services of the water master and lawn mowers were discontinued, the jobs to be handled by the appointed city employees; and the appointed employees would sustain a twenty percent cut in salary for the rest of the fiscal year, up from the ten percent of May 1, for a savings of \$1,500. The mayor assured the citizenry that "any reductions made are not a reflection on the value of services rendered by employees or the measure of their worth or that they were too highly paid, but are made necessary by present conditions."

Governor Ross was back in town on November 1. Mayor Porter had met him in Thornton and then accompanied him to Rexburg. Arriving in the city at 12:00 p.m., they were met by bands and school children, and then marched to the Idamont Hotel. After a lunch at the home of Lorenzo Jenson, the governor and mayor traveled to the Sugar-Salem High School where the governor addressed the student body. They then returned to Madison High School and the governor talked to those students. The big rally took place that evening in the tabernacle. Mayor Porter was in charge. Governor Ross was clearly "man of the hour" as he received a standing ovation from approximately two thousand people as he entered the building. Bands played, songs were sung. The mayor introduced the governor and listened with others to a two and one-half hour political campaign

speech. The mayor noted that "the audience, much the largest to attend a Democratic meeting in this section in twenty-five years, sat quite attentively to the end. It looks as though this county might go Democratic. The governor is delighted."

The mayor campaigned vigorously for Democratic candidates. He worked late at the newspaper office November 3 to get the campaign issue off the press. "It is a good campaign number," he wrote, and was "very satisfactory to the candidates."

Sunday, November 6, Fast Day, the mayor was surprised and certainly a little annoyed when "George H. B. Harris [arose] to speak and earnestly [advised] the people to vote for President Hoover. He reminds the people that President Heber J. Grant has announced that he intends to vote for Hoover . . . Brother Harris several times urges following the example of the president of the Church. This reminds me," continued Porter, "that Brother Sessions of Pocatello, superintendent of the institute and president of a prohibition organization, came to see me Saturday and advised me to support Hoover. He is surprised that a man holding my Church position [counselor in the stake presidency] should support Mayor Coffin [of Pocatello] for congress and Roosevelt for president because of their statements in favor of repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. I defend my course by saying I believe it equally important to remain with my political party and assist in directing its policy. I do not consider that the wet and dry issue should enter political campaigns and will debate that later. I believe the leadership of the party should be strengthened rather than weakened. It is practically certain the Democratic Party will win this election; in which case I want to be in a position to influence its activities."

Using a Fast Meeting for a political speech on behalf of the Republican Party did not seem to help. After the election, held Tuesday, November 8, a national and state Democratic Party landslide was recorded. The mayor, of course, was pleased. And not only because his party had been successful, but also because, he said, "it places me in line for the county printing, the first such victory I have enjoyed since 1910 when old Fremont County, of which we were then a part, went Democratic and the *Journal* was designated the official organ."

Euphoria over the Democratic victory continued the day after the election. "The great Democratic victory is a matter of comment all day," noted the mayor. "People are almost stunned by its proportions, or rather by the extent of the protest against the Republican Party. A great responsibility has been given to the Democratic Party."

November 12 the mayor met with County Commissioner John Taylor to develop plans for using \$750 of Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds sent to the mayor by Governor Ross for unemployed in the city and county. They decided to hire men at twenty-five cents per hour to clean streets and ditches. Earlier in November, Mayor Porter had been appointed to a committee of fourteen to administer RFC funds in the city and county and was elected committee chairman. The committee was called into session by the mayor each Friday at 1:30 p.m. at the courthouse. The committee took applications and discussed allocation of relief funds. Porter explained that "funds provided are to supplement local or county charity provisions and not to replace the work of these organizations. Work is provided for men at twenty-five cents an hour for about five days a month. In order to assure the funds being used for food and clothing, the men are paid with orders on grocery or clothing stores. It is an emergency provision to prevent suffering for necessities."

Meetings were open to the public and the public was invited to check the expenditure record. Rumors had circulated that some money was being diverted for administrative purposes including paying committee members. Porter dispelled the rumors by explaining procedure and indicating that "every dollar received from the government is paid out to the unemployed, all committeemen, clerks, foremen, etc., serving without pay." Rumors would resurface from time to time over the next several months. Nevertheless, by February 1933, some \$9,000 had been used by the committee to provide "for people out of work and in need of food, clothing, or fuel by reason of the depression."

Mayor Porter began 1933 by attending the inauguration of Governor Ross for another term and by attending opening sessions of the legislature. Again he lobbied several members of the legislature to accept Ricks College into the state educational system — again, unsuccessfully.

At the March 15 city council meeting, Ordinance No. 312 was enacted setting salaries for the mayor and councilmen. The mayor's salary was reduced to \$45 per quarter; councilmen would receive \$22.50 per quarter. That represented over a fifty percent reduction in salary since Ordinance No. 308 set salaries in April 1931. Still, there was no alternative. The ordinance was both practical and politic. At the same meeting, the problem of the "peddling evil" was discussed. Peddlers had descended in great number on the city. Some were courteous; many were obnoxious. The mayor referred the matter to the streets committee for study and recommendations.

The "bank holiday" imposed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of his New Deal program had an effect in Rexburg. The city council agreed to extend from March 10th to the 25th the discount date for paying city water bills.

A political rally was held March 31 at the courthouse to nominate candidates for city offices. The entire present city administration was nominated. Over one hundred attended the rally and expressed "enthusiastic support of the present administration." The candidates would be known as the "People's Party." Several days later the "Citizens" ticket entered the field calling for a "New Deal" in local affairs. Oswald Christensen was mayoral candidate. The campaign was vigorous. The biggest issue was use of federal and state relief funds. Citizens Party candidates charged that irregularities had become apparent in disbursement of funds. Porter effectively refuted the charge. He skillfully exploited the fact that, despite exigencies of the depression, the city would end the fiscal year with a cash balance which would be applied to the city's bonded indebtedness. This conservative management of taxpayers' money, despite decreasing revenues, had an effect on the campaign. When ballots had been tallied at the election's conclusion April 25, Porter had defeated Christensen by 337 votes out of 1145 cast. Three councilmen from the Citizens Party were elected: H. Lester Petersen, D. W. Stowell, and Fred Shirley. Retained from the previous administration were James S. Webster, F. D. Kelley, and H. A. Wright.

Joseph DeMott appeared at the first city council meeting of the new administration Wednesday, May 3, to request permission for the west half of the city park to be used as a baseball field. The mayor delegated

the matter to the roads and public grounds committee of which H. Lester Petersen was chairman. The mayor's influence was obvious in the recommendation brought by Petersen to council meeting May 8. Permission was granted to use the park for baseball with the following conditions: payment of fifteen percent of any income to defray the cost of city maintenance; do not damage trees or shrubs; and no Sunday ball. If the conditions were violated, the mayor was authorized to simply close the park from further use by the baseball team.

At the May 8 meeting, the mayor was incensed to be advised that, among the list of those delinquent in paying their water assessment, were several who had regular jobs with regular incomes. He directed the water superintendent to inform those delinquent to pay or have the water shut off.

Council business was next directed to the Van Dyke Studio, an itinerant photography business. The manager, Harold Messenger, refused to pay the \$15 city license tax on the basis that the Van Dyke Studio was an interstate business, taking pictures in Rexburg and having them developed in another state, and hence not subject to Rexburg's licensing laws. The mayor did not agree with that interpretation of the law, and the police department was authorized to "proceed with such action as might secure justice." Ray McEntire, chief of police, proceeded to arrest Messenger.

Messenger was arraigned in city court before Magistrate Thomas Richman. Messenger asked for time to prepare for a trial. Richman granted the request, setting May 31 at 10:00 a.m. for a hearing. Messenger was released under a \$25 bond. Probably no one was surprised when Messenger did not keep the date in court, whereupon Magistrate Richman "entered an order showing the bond forfeited and the \$25 was placed in the city treasury." A *Rexburg Journal* reporter noted, somewhat facetiously, "Thus ended the most important case handled in the city court in a long time, the sum obtained being the largest single item placed in the treasury from this department since the depression began."

For some time city officials had been discussing a request by Utah Power and Light for a fifty-year franchise to provide electrical services to Rexburg. At council meeting July 19, 1933, Ordinance No. 313 was enacted under suspension of rules and the franchise was granted to run

until July 19, 1983. There were those in the city and county who felt the whole thing was irregular and did not represent people's best interests. A mass meeting was called at the courthouse on Monday, August 14. A self-styled "citizens committee" headed by attorney C. L. Hillman and others called the meeting. Mrs. Ethel Young was chairman. Arguments were made that the franchise was for too long a period, that any city or area electrical power development was excluded, that Utah Power and Light received free rein to place more poles in city streets and alleys, and that passing the ordinance in a single meeting seemed underhanded. A resolution was adopted for presentation to the city council on August 16 which called for repeal of the ordinance and allowed Utah Power and Light a franchise for only eight years.

Mayor Porter explained that the franchise was in no way exclusive, and that municipal power plants could be developed. Also, granting such franchises for fifty years was common practice to allow recovery of investment costs and for payment of dividends to investors. Furthermore, state law providing for passing city ordinances by suspending the three reading rule had been used many times in the past, including granting power company franchises, and had not been used as a means to enact ordinances before the public had a chance to react. The outcome was that the citizens committee resolution was considered and filed.

Ordinances No. 314 and No. 313 were enacted at the same meeting on August 16. Ordinance No. 314 was enacted to "regulate the sale by retailers of beer and other beverages containing alcohol in quantities made legal within the State of Idaho." The state had followed guidelines of the Beer and Wine Revenue Act passed March 22, 1933, as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal reform program. In Rexburg a license of \$12.50 per year was required. No alcoholic beverage sales were allowed in grocery or general merchandise stores. Compliance with state and national laws respecting sale of alcoholic beverages must have disturbed the mayor and most of the councilmen.

The year 1933 was Rexburg's "Golden Jubilee" year. The mayor played a large, ceremonial part in festivities. August 1, 2, and 3 were dates of the big fifty-year birthday celebration. Jubilee floats were entered in Idaho Falls' Fourth of July parade and the St. Anthony July

24th parade for advertisement purposes. Newspaper articles appeared in several southeast Idaho newspapers.

The mayor opened the celebration the afternoon of August 1 on a platform erected in the middle of Main Street. He welcomed people attending and crowned two Jubilee queens during his address:

Mayor's Opening Address at the Jubilee Celebration

Fellow citizens and neighbors. The opportunity has arrived to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Rexburg. We open this Golden Jubilee under auspicious circumstances enjoying today, as we do, good homes and safety in this smiling valley, good health, good water, good schools, good means of transportation, the prospect of valuable crops and all the blessings and advantages of fifty years of progress. This should be an occasion of thanksgiving.

As mayor of Rexburg, it becomes my privilege and honor to crown the Queen of the Pioneers and the Queen of this Golden Jubilee, to bid welcome to our visitors, and to formally open the celebration.

Mrs. Helena Jensen, daughter of Henry Flamm, arrived in Rexburg April 3, 1883, and has made her home here ever since. She was the first woman to arrive in the newly established Rexburg. Chosen among the fairest of the surviving pioneers of 1883, it is an honor to place this crown on your head and publicly announce you as the Pioneer Queen. (Place golden crown.)

Likewise, Miss Margaret Poole, daughter of the pioneer H. E. Poole, it is a delightful privilege (place silver crown) to place this crown on your head and publicly acclaim you Queen of the Golden Jubilee.

I am sure it gives this great public a genuine pleasure to hail you as the queens of 1883 and 1933. And may the loveliness and feminine charm of both this saintly matron and beautiful young woman supplement, wherein my words fail to impress, the spirit of this meeting. Queen Helena and Queen Margaret, I salute you and ask you to join in greeting this company.

We are met to commemorate the founding of a city and a community and to witness the progress of fifty years. As we think on the purpose of this meeting and the presence with us of several of the original party who came here to establish this city, we are thrilled with admiration for the foresight and courage and industry of those who set up this commonwealth. We contemplate with reverence the institutions they founded and the progress they set in motion.

Every picture tells a story; every building marks some progress. Every highway, every canal, every cultivated field is a monument to the enterprise, courage, and faith of the pioneers and their families. Every church, every

school, every public institution and family mark chapters in a wonderful drama — the life and growth of an American commonwealth.

Now, what of the future. To the pioneers, greater than all their tangible works and signs of progress was their dream and hope of life everlasting, and so they established institutions and moral standards for the uplift of their souls. Imbued with a deep religious devotion, they at once provided for Church organizations and education. In these first years, Ricks College was founded where, in connection with secular education, the teaching and living of religion was an essential part of the daily curriculum. The influence of this institution has been impressed in all the settlements of the valley.

To every community, as to every man, the way is open to go upward or downward. I commend to you the spirit of the pioneers. Their work, their sacrifices, their love, their very lives were given that we might live. Let us take from this occasion an inspiration to carry forward their work — the institutions and high character that they established.

But, we are met today, not only to draw lessons from the pioneers, but to enjoy a visit. This is the happy meeting. Today we are together as friends, so let us be merry. In due course the parting comes and we who are friends together may go different ways and not meet again. In the great drama of life, we meet and act and exit from the stage. If we have caused unhappiness, we have failed; if we add a measure of sunshine, of hope, of pleasure, we have succeeded. May the spirit of generosity and good fellowship characterize this Golden Jubilee.

The parks and public buildings of Rexburg and fountains of pure water and other facilities are for your use and comfort. Officers and committeemen are ready to assist you. In the interest of safety and general welfare, I make an appeal for sobriety. Let us indulge the hope that neither accident or untoward events may mar the pleasure of this meeting.

As mayor of the City of Rexburg whose fiftieth anniversary or Golden Jubilee we honor, and in behalf of the citizens of Rexburg, I deliver to you the key of the city and bid you welcome.

The Golden Jubilee is now in progress.

The Golden Jubilee activities included a fashion show of one-hundred-year-old wedding gowns, evening dances at the Playmore Hall in the WOW building, a rodeo each evening, ball games and boxing matches, Japanese dancing, a pageant, and a parade. The mayor's wife was one of the judges who awarded cash prizes to winning parade entries.

Culmination of the jubilee actually occurred two years later on September 28, 1935, when a monument commemorating the pioneers was dedicated near the Rexburg Stake Tabernacle. A pioneer

monument committee had been organized late in 1934 to see that a fitting monument was prepared. The mayor, as a member of the Rexburg Stake Presidency, was a member of that committee. The monument, built of native granite quarried from Teton Canyon and constructed at a cost of about \$1,000, was dedicated by Apostle George Albert Smith.

In the fall of 1933, Mayor Porter, along with L. Y. Rigby and Delbert G. Taylor, was appointed to the federal re-employment committee. Men out of work registered with the committee. As city or county projects needing labor commenced, the registered men were employed. The committee carefully monitored the needs of those needing work.

On Saturday, September 2, Mrs. Elizabeth Aeschbacher, aged seventy, was hit and killed by a car at the intersection of Second West and Second South streets. The effect of this tragedy was felt at the council meeting on September 6. Discussion centered around the fact that the city did not have enough policemen to adequately enforce traffic laws and many had taken advantage of the situation. The council decided to authorize the mayor to employ another policeman, reasoning that the man's salary could be paid from fines paid by arrest of traffic law violators. "All who fail to stop at stop signs, or who drive at a reckless rate, or who drive while under the influence of liquor are to be brought before the judge." The action was also deemed advisable because school was soon to start.

At council meeting November 1, a decision was made to call a mass meeting at the courthouse on November 15 to explain and discuss a program whereby the federal government would lend money to cities. Thirty percent of the total amount would be a grant. The other seventy percent would be paid back at four percent interest. The city would issue bonds to secure the money. At the meeting the mayor spoke about two projects which could be funded by federal money. Work was necessary on the main water line. About three thousand feet of wooden pipe needed to be replaced with cast iron pipe, and about sixteen thousand feet of two-inch mains needed to be replaced with four-inch mains. Also, several city streets needed oiling. Taxpayers were reluctant to have taxes raised at all, even under favorable government

loan terms. The mayor was disappointed, and the program was not adopted. A subsequent public meeting failed to elicit any more support.

Porter spent much time and energy during the remainder of 1933 trying to cope with the economic crisis. He was summoned to Boise to meet with the governor to discuss the civil works program as developed under the national Civil Works Administration. There he found out that Madison County was allotted 175 men under the new program. The men were to be paid fifty-five cents per hour and work thirty hours a week for three months. There was some discussion about the fifty-five cents per hour rate of pay. Many argued that to pay more than thirty cents per hour would disrupt the agricultural harvest as farmers could not afford to pay fifty-five cents an hour and would not be able to hire men to work in the harvest. Nevertheless, several county and city projects were begun at fifty-five cents per hour under the auspices of the newly formed county civil works committee that was formed from the previous county relief committee which the mayor chaired. Also, the federal re-employment committee was involved in seeing that men applying for work qualified for relief funds. So Porter was involved in seeing that men were eligible and then that they did work.

The mayor and other members of the Madison County Civil Works Committee met in Idaho Falls on Monday, December 11, with Parker P. Carver, state chairman. They were informed that projects were progressing well and that skilled labor would be entitled to eighty-five cents an hour. Also, checks were to be paid each Saturday by the designated disbursing officer – Gene Keller, in the case of Madison County. Carver notified the Madison committee that one or more cars of coal would be disbursed in the county for those unable to purchase fuel for the winter. Also, three thousand pounds of salt pork was to be disbursed to the needy.

By mid-December complaints had been registered claiming that “prosperous farmers” were working on civil works projects, getting paid, and were thus depriving poor men from getting any money. Members of the re-employment committee pointed out that “prosperous farmers” donated labor and equipment to civil works projects to provide the equipment needed to keep the men busy.

Mayor Porter continued to work diligently on relief programs during 1934. In January the Madison County Relief Committee was

reorganized with County Commissioner Arnold Williams, chairman, and Mayor Porter, vice-chairman. The committee received word that fifteen hundred pounds of beef had been allotted to Madison County for January and February. The committee was responsible for a large amount of permanent work being done in Madison County and Rexburg. Roads were being graded and graveled, work was underway on the Teton River to facilitate the flow of water into the city canal, part of the cemetery was being leveled, public buildings were being cleaned and painted, and an airfield was being built south of town.

An announcement was made by J. T. Lloyd, state CWA representative, that all CWA projects needed to be concluded by March 31. Any relief projects after that date would be under a different relief agency. One CWA project which the mayor especially wanted completed before March 31 was the building of restrooms in the city park. That project was concluded.

In the midst of his public works efforts, the mayor took time to be the chairman of a committee established to make arrangements for the "President's Birthday Ball." The dance was held at the Playmore Hall on January 30. Proceeds from the dance were donated to the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation to aid those suffering from infantile paralysis (poliomyelitis), the disease which had crippled the president. January 30 was President Roosevelt's fifty-second birthday. Rexburg and Madison County did their share, considering the economic climate, to aid those who had been stricken with the dreaded disease.

An old problem surfaced at council meeting March 28, 1934 — how to stop all the city water from being wasted. This was an especially acute problem as the area was experiencing drought conditions. By Ordinance No. 316, the council enacted a solution to the problem. All water used by a residence or business would be run through a meter, not just water that was used in the house. Meters would be required in all establishments. Only about ten percent were presently metered. This was viewed as an economy measure so costs could be lowered. Widows who had been receiving two thousand gallons per month free would now get only one thousand gallons. If any family moved in with the widow, the right to free water was rescinded. Distribution and sale of city water was determined by Ordinance No. 317 enacted April 26.

On April 4 Mayor Porter proclaimed a city holiday so everyone so inclined could go to Idaho Falls and see the latest version of the *Iron Horse*, Union Pacific's *Golden Arrow* passenger train. The mayor and other dignitaries rode a train to Pocatello. There they boarded the *Golden Arrow* for the thrilling ride back to Idaho Falls courtesy of the railroad company. Crowds seeing the train marveled. But few from Rexburg could afford to ride the train. They needed to use what resources they had to buy necessities of life.

May 28 and 29 found the mayor in Boise as one of the representatives from the upper valley and Rexburg attending a meeting of the Idaho Planning Conference. The meeting was held in Hotel Boise under the chairmanship of Eugene A. Cox. Speeches were delivered on various aspects of city, county, and regional planning and discussions were held. One major problem was how to get enough water for the irrigation season considering the drought. Several suggestions were made, none practical, to tap the lakes in the Upper Snake River Valley and divert water down the Snake River. Even tunneling into Yellowstone Lake was considered.

In July the mayor and his family attended a Child family reunion at Basalt, Idaho. A family organization was established to do genealogical research on the Wilder line. Nelle Child Porter's paternal grandmother was Hannah Austin Wilder, wife of Warren Gould Child. They were the parents of Austin Wilder Child, Nelle's father.

The annual Whoopee Days' celebration was held late in August. The mayor crowned Miss Beverly Herdti queen of the celebration at the free dance at Playmore Hall on Thursday, August 23. The next evening he gave a welcoming address and gave an optimistic review of the city's progress during the past year.

On September 5 at city council meeting, the mayor reported on a Teton River water users meeting he had attended. The meeting had been held in Sugar City late in August. He was concerned that sentiment to divert Teton River water upstream would threaten Rexburg's water right. He suggested that funds might be necessary to legally fight the diversion. The mayor went on record as adamantly opposing any change in the city canal channel to accommodate changes in the Teton River. The mayor and city council rejected a proposal by a drought committee providing that waters of the Teton River be

conducted through canals originating near Teton City in times of drought or shortage instead of in the present river bed. The idea was that more water would thus be available for irrigation use. The committee estimated that between four thousand and six thousand inches of water were lost to seepage and evaporation between Teton City and Rexburg in the existing river bed. The water would eventually get to the Rexburg canal and the decreed amount would be available. The mayor and councilmen had serious reservations about that. City officials successfully maintained their position.

The mayor spoke at Rotary Club meeting on September 13. He outlined the financial condition of Ricks College and predicted an increased enrollment for the coming school year. His prediction was vindicated with an increase of over thirty percent over the previous year. On September 25 he spoke to the Ricks College student body, welcomed them to Rexburg, and assured them of continued support of the city administration.

Late in October, Porter issued his last official proclamation as mayor of Rexburg:

October the 27th has been designated as "Navy Day," and it is right and proper that all recognize and appreciate the importance of that day.

This great function of our government and its glorious past is familiar to all of us, and its wonderful achievements have endeared it to all the people of this nation.

Therefore, acting in harmony with officers of other cities of the nation and by virtue of the authority in me vested, I do hereby declare October 27th as "Navy Day" and request that that day be duly revered in the minds and hearts of our citizens.

On December 7 the mayor welcomed to Rexburg some two hundred members of the American Legion assembled for district convention. Members from Shelley to Victor gathered to be hosted by the local organization.

At the January 2, 1935, council meeting, Howard Swenson presented a proposal to "secure and equip a building on College Avenue to be used as administration building for the FERA, the expense of the rent to be born by the City of Rexburg and Madison County. The amount requested was \$100." The request was approved.

The mayor and his wife were special guests at a Rook party sponsored by Superintendent and Mrs. Ezra S. Stucki on the evening of February 1. All teachers from Rexburg schools were invited as well as school board members. The evening was kicked off by watching Madison High School beat Sugar-Salem High School in a basketball game. The group then met in the high school art room to play Rook. About midnight, the festivities concluded with refreshments served by Mrs. Stucki and girls from the home economics department. The party provided a pleasant way to spend a winter's evening.

A special city council meeting was called by the mayor on March 13. The purpose was to discuss the bonded indebtedness of the city. The council passed a resolution to "refund \$92,000 of the city's general obligation bonds on a twenty-year amortization plan. The refunded bonds [would] carry an interest rate of four and three-quarters percent and will replace the present bonds that draw six percent. The change will represent a savings in interest of \$1,150 a year over what is now being paid. Also, the plan provides for annual retirement of several bonds, all to be paid in twenty years." Ordinance No. 320, enacted March 21, affirmed the resolution.

In mid-March the mayor was appointed by Governor Ross to membership in the "Citizens Committee in Madison County." Twenty-nine others were also appointed. Porter was elected chairman by committee members. His experience administering relief committees made him an obvious choice. Committee members were "authorized to call on city councils and the county commissioners on the matter of establishing consistent wages for work on relief projects in Madison County." But, the mayor chaired a committee that would never function. Federal monies were withheld from Idaho the last half of March because the Idaho legislature refused to comply with new federal regulations that states had to be responsible for a share of the relief program in the state. The state had been receiving about \$800,000 per month from the federal government. The state was supposed to raise \$100,000 a month to help with relief. Governor Ross made several tax proposals to raise the \$100,000 to keep the \$800,000, but each was voted down when presented. The state did pass a sales tax during the session, but the proceeds were not earmarked for relief funds. Idaho and Maryland were the only states that had funds withheld for non-

compliance with federal regulations. The withholding of \$800,000 in relief funds had an immediate adverse impact on several Idaho communities including Rexburg.

Mayor Porter did not need to worry too much about the city's need for relief funds because he decided not to run again for mayor in 1935. Dr. Harlo B. Rigby defeated Daniel Ricks for mayor in the April 23 election. But before he left office, Mayor Porter and his administration transacted two significant items of business. By Ordinance No. 321, the mayor's salary was raised from \$180 per year to \$300 per year. Councilmen were raised from \$90 per year to \$120 per year. By mid 1935 the Rexburg economy had improved to the point that raises could be given without a reorganization of the "taxpayers committee." At any rate, if there were protests, the new mayor could handle them.

The other item of business pertained, naturally, to trees. "Ralph Parker appeared before the council presenting the matter of planting an evergreen windbreak along the edge of the hill south of town. Trees can be furnished from the Island Park reservoir site by the CCC workers, the only cost being transportation. Mayor Porter reported that Russian olive trees could be purchased at the University of Idaho at \$7 per thousand." The council recommended and authorized the "purchase and planting of one thousand Russian olive trees as a windbreak belt." The mayor was pleased to arrange for their planting.

Porter could look back on his service as mayor of Rexburg with a great deal of satisfaction. He had conscientiously moved the city through the harshest depression years. City population increased from about 3,300 in 1930 to about 3,700 in 1935. Population growth increasingly taxed city resources, but Porter's administration had coped with the problems created. Administration of both city government and several relief committees was skillfully accomplished. The mayor was in the stake presidency all through his years as mayor and on the board of education of Ricks College and the board of directors of LDS Hospital in Idaho Falls as well as continuing his publishing and merchandising businesses. Now he could turn more attention to his nonpolitical responsibilities although he would stay involved in Democratic Party politics on local and state levels.



Nelle Child Porter

11

House of Representatives 1943-1946

On August 27, 1942, Porter, along with other prominent Democrats from Madison County, left by train for Boise to attend both the Democratic State Convention and Young Democrats Convention. Arnold Williams, a former Rexburg businessman, was being touted for state Democratic Party chairman. (Williams had also been associated with Porter in business activities as he was the owner of a building on College Avenue which was adjacent to the building owned by Porter. Heating and maintenance for the group of buildings was shared by Porter, Williams, and Joe Sorenson.) Williams had, of course, the support of the Madison County delegation. Democrats were encouraged to give active support to Democratic candidates in the campaign underway for November's election.

Porter had undoubtedly thought about making the race for state House of Representatives for several years, perhaps ever since he had watched the house in action as an assistant clerk during the 1917 session. But the opportunity had not presented itself until 1942. He had used his considerable influence in behalf of other candidates for many years. Now, Democrats rallied behind him as their choice for Madison County's representative.

Porter was running against the popular Willis Walker, but the campaign was quite low key. Porter's credentials were advertised in the *Rexburg Journal*: "Publisher of the *Rexburg Journal*, served as mayor of Rexburg three terms, is a member of the stake presidency, formerly a teacher at Ricks Academy and member of the board. Served one session as assistant clerk of the Idaho House of Representatives, desires to serve as Madison County's representative in the next session."

After the November election, the official canvas of votes indicated that Porter had not received a mandate from the voters. In an exceptionally close race, he had garnered 1,468 votes to Walker's 1,433, a plurality of thirty-five votes. There must have been some tension as the vote tally was being recorded. Porter had a majority of votes in the following precincts: Herbert, Hibbard, Plano, Rexburg First, Second, Third, and Thornton. Walker had a majority in Archer, Independence, Lyman, Moody, Rexburg Fourth, Salem and Sugar City. Canyon Creek Precinct gave each man ten votes. "I greatly appreciate the honor conferred on me by the voters of Madison County to be their next representative in the Idaho legislature," proclaimed Porter. "I shall do all I can to promote the best interests of this county and state."

Porter entered quickly upon his service to the state. Monday, November 15, he traveled to Pocatello, along with other elected officials, to attend a meeting of the Associated Civic Clubs of Southeast Idaho. "Purpose of the meeting was to discuss forthcoming legislation and problems of business and farmers." Porter was appointed as a member of a committee to draft a resolution directed to the national Office of Price Administration (OPA), a wartime agency. The resolution encouraged a re-evaluation of recent price ceilings on agricultural commodities: "These ceiling prices have apparently been established without taking into consideration this region is the most distant from market centers of any part of the United States and has very high freight rates to consumer markets. This, together with heavily increased production costs and scarcity of labor, affects seriously farm operations, especially in the production of potatoes, sugar beets, wheat, and all livestock and dairy products . . . We urge a revision of the ceiling prices . . . to create parity for Southeastern Idaho."

Porter's committee presented another resolution — which was adopted — directed to the "Manpower Director for Idaho" calling attention to the fact that draining manpower resources by the draft would, in effect, be counter productive. After all, insufficient farm laborers would mean that some crops might not be harvested and thus would not be available to aid the war effort. The resolution very logically called for the federal government to "release sufficient unnecessary workers of its three million government employees to help meet the draft quotas . . . and supply needed men in war industries which will assist in saving our badly needed farm help and men at present trained in war industries and mines." Despite the resolution, the drafters were undoubtedly not too confident that a substantial number of the three million government employees would be willing to be available for the draft.

The resolutions were read at the banquet the evening of November 15. Governor-elect C. A. Bottolfsen was in attendance and spoke to the delegation, commended the resolutions, and encouraged those in attendance, especially elected officials, to persevere in the face of wartime privations.

There was some discussion about the forthcoming legislative session at the meeting. In the recent election a referendum for a state senior citizens pension' for those sixty-seven years of age or older had been on the ballot. The referendum had passed, but, to implement the pension, a raise in taxes would be necessary. Bottolfsen served notice that he was not interested in a legislative session concentrating on anything other than war measures.

After Porter returned to Rexburg, he spent considerable time assessing local opinion regarding their perception of what the next legislature ought or ought not to do. Porter could clearly see that his constituency was interested in more than war measures and expected some action on taxation, liquor control, and the pension plan, among other things.

Porter left for Boise January 1, 1943. The *Idaho Sunday Statesman* introduced the freshman lawmaker to its readership in the January 3 issue: "Madison — Arthur Porter, Rexburg newspaperman, Democrat, serving first term. Served as assistant clerk in the house. Served three terms as mayor of Rexburg; three terms as councilman. He is sixty-six;

has lived in Idaho forty-two years. Holds a B.S. degree. Is married and the father of ten."

On January 4 Porter was sworn in as a member of the Idaho House of Representatives for the Twenty-seventh Legislature. He was appointed to the printing and state institutions committees.

Freshman legislators are usually seen and not heard. Porter followed the pattern somewhat, but he was too well known in Idaho political circles to be treated like a novice. When he introduced House Bill No. 28 relating to funding for cemetery maintenance, little discussion was elicited. Porter's familiarity with the laws governing cemetery districts and maintenance thereof was quite apparent. The bill passed unanimously and was signed by the governor February 5.

A house bill that would have a direct effect on Porter was No. 190. That bill, as passed and signed by Governor Bottolfsen, created county public assistance councils. The bill specified that a council be set up in each county composed of five members. The county commission would appoint one member and the governor would appoint four with no more than two from the same political party.

Representative Porter was appointed by the governor to Madison County's Public Assistance Council in June 1943 for a one-year term. He would serve with Oswald Christensen, appointed to a two-year term, and Eph Ricks and Ernest Blaser who both received three-year appointments. County Commissioner George Briggs, Jr., would represent the commission as long as he was a commission member.

Legislated responsibilities of the Madison County Public Assistance Council were: "Make periodic reviews of all cases approved, or heretofore approved, for public assistance within the county for the purpose of determining the continuing eligibility of the recipient for public assistance; furnish information to applicants and the public in general as to who is eligible for public assistance and the rules and regulations promulgated by the state department in regard thereto, to the end that there may be more widespread knowledge of the real purpose of the public assistance program and the administration thereof; to recommend to the state department such rules, regulations, policies and procedures as, in the judgment of the council, shall increase efficiency, effect economy, and generally improve the administration of public assistance."

Early in March 1944, Representative Porter responded to the governor's call for two "extraordinary sessions of the Twenty-seventh Legislature." The first session convened on February 28, 1944, and dealt with voting rights of members of the armed forces. One bill allowed members of the armed forces to vote by absentee ballot. Another bill moved the primary election date ahead to the second week in June so that absentee ballots could be sent overseas and received back before the general election. Both bills became law by unanimous vote.

The session adjourned at 12:00 noon on March 1 and the second session was immediately convened. Two items were on the agenda: a request by the department of public assistance for an appropriation of \$150,000 which would allow a raise in the average grant to the needy from \$29.96 to \$32.28; and more money was needed to raise teacher salaries. The first request was passed unanimously with little debate. What to do about teacher salaries, however, was not so easily handled.

"One bill provided for the appointment of a committee of seven to investigate the Idaho school set up and report recommendations for reorganization or improvement to the next legislature." The bill easily passed both houses. The committee was to be composed of two senators, two representatives, two governor appointees, and the state superintendent of public instruction.

What to do about teacher salaries before the committee reported and what action should be taken by the next legislature elicited two proposals. One plan would appropriate \$250,000 from the general fund of the state to be allocated to school districts on the basis of need but only after the district had levied to the limit of its taxing authority. If funds were still insufficient to meet salary needs to retain teachers (teachers could go almost anywhere and get more money than in Idaho) then counties would be authorized to levy up to one mill in ad valorem taxes in addition to the legal limit of three mills. This plan passed the house but failed in the senate.

The next plan placed the burden for school financing and teacher retention on the counties by authorizing a one and one-half mill increase in property tax levies. The state would appropriate a \$100,000 contingency fund to aid if a county with the four and one-half mill

limit still could not meet educational requirements. The measure passed with Porter voting with the majority.

The measure was criticized as too little too late, especially in Madison County. Even a one and one-half mill increase in the tax levy would not make Madison School District comparable with any other district in the state. Madison paid the lowest teacher salaries in one of the lowest paying states in the nation. Madison anticipated levying the additional one and one-half mills which would raise about \$8,250. To meet the needs of the district, an additional \$9,050 was needed from the state appropriation. All the planning and aspirations were shattered when District Judge Charles E. Winstead of Boise declared, early in December, the emergency school bill was "beyond the constitutional powers of the state legislature to enact" and thus unconstitutional. The issue was precipitated into the next legislative session.

By April 25, 1944, Porter's intentions to run for another term in the state legislature had become quite clear. He filed on that day his petition for the primary election. He ran unopposed on the Democratic ticket. On the Republican side, N. Leslie Andrus of Lyman lost to J. Kenneth Thatcher of Sugar City in the primary election held June 13.

The first big Democratic rally was held in the Sugar City movie theater on October 9. All county and some state candidates were present. To entice voters to the rally, a movie was shown. About midway through the movie, an intermission allowed candidates the opportunity to express their views. Porter spoke on his record during the last term. The main speaker was Glen Taylor, candidate for United States Senator. He rehearsed Roosevelt's record and excoriated Thomas E. Dewey, Republican presidential candidate.

The *Rexburg Journal* of October 5 carried the following: "The county candidates on the Democratic ticket are all experienced in handling the affairs of the county and the office they seek. Under their leadership, the county has consistently reduced its debt and, at the same time, has maintained its place in the state by building improved farm-to-market roads, new buildings, and other improvements that have made us the envy of surrounding communities. We recommend their continuance in office and ask that you vote for them. These candidates are particularly interested in the men and women in uniform. Their own sons, daughters, brothers, and relatives are serving in the armed

forces. They are determined to keep Madison County and Idaho the kind of place the service men and women will want to return to."

Porter's campaign was supported with the announcement that he "has been active in the affairs of Madison County since it was created. No public enterprise has been promoted that has not had his support. His long experience eminently qualifies him for the office which he seeks. During his last term in the legislature, he was well thought of by all members of the legislature, and he successfully had passed his bills regarding cemetery districts."

Perhaps the support of his friends had the most to do with Porter's campaign. The October 26 issue of the *Rexburg Journal* carried an item entitled "This Message Written and Sponsored by Friends."

In Arthur Porter the voters of Madison County have before them for their approval a man of long experience in public affairs. Coming to Rexburg years ago as a teacher at Ricks College he has devoted much of his time and effort in community activities.

He is successful in business and at present is owner and manager of the Porter's Book Store, one of the oldest business establishments in Rexburg. He is also owner of the *Rexburg Journal*.

He has been elected, and served diligently, on the city council in Rexburg. He has also served as mayor of Rexburg for three terms. His service as mayor was during the depression years when money was scarce, but, despite this handicap, his administration designed and planted the city park which is admired by all visitors who pass this way and which has been a source of enjoyment to many people throughout the county.

He also took a leading part in setting up the Rexburg Cemetery District, and, under this program, the cemetery has since been changed from a weed patch with poorly kept graves to a place of beauty. This administration also planned and conducted a number of other permanent and beneficial improvements.

In the last session of the legislature, he led the fight to defeat a bill that threatened to destroy the cemetery district law and that would have enabled outside corporations owning property in the district to withdraw and not be subject to the tax for maintenance. He was successful in putting through the house bills requested by the people of the county.

Any public movement that has been for the betterment of the county has always had his active support. In the erection of public buildings or other worthwhile projects, he has always been in favor of them, and he has given of his time and means in their support.

Although rather quiet in manner, he is energetic in denunciation of anything that he feels is not to the best interests of the people of this county.

Because of his interest in and long identification with the development of this community, we believe the people of Madison County will be fully justified in electing Arthur Porter to the House of Representatives.

An editorial in the *Rexburg Journal* just a few days before the election touted Representative Porter and Senator James E. Graham. "No governor or lieutenant governor can have a successful administration without a friendly legislature to back up their program. It is, therefore, only logical that the voters should choose Senator J. E. Graham and Representative Arthur Porter to represent them in the legislature. Both of these men served in this capacity before. They are experienced legislators and have established enviable reputations in the state capital and are noted for their keen insight into governmental affairs. In the next state legislature, they will have a seniority over most of their colleagues which will prove very beneficial to our county. Their requests will be given more consideration because of their previous records. They have consistently voted to insure sound government. Their loyalty to country, their desire to build Idaho and Madison County, and their outstanding abilities and achievements are well known to everyone and need not be repeated here. They are truly representative of the progressive people."

The election was held on November 7, and Madison County followed state and national trends with a Democratic sweep. Idaho elected a Democratic governor, Charles C. Gossett. Arnold Williams of Rexburg was elected lieutenant governor, and Glen Taylor upset Governor C. A. Bottolfsen for the United States Senate. In Madison County Porter received 1,845 votes to 1,651 for Thatcher. Porter had a majority in the following precincts: Archer, Canyon Creek, Herbert, Hibbard, Lyman, Plano, Rexburg First, Second, Third, and Fourth, and Thornton. Thatcher had a majority in Independence, Moody, Salem, and Sugar City.

"I deeply appreciate the honor of representing you in the legislature as well as the many expressions of friendship," Porter said. "I shall be pleased to receive any suggestions from citizens of Madison County and will try to the best of my ability to give you satisfactory service in the legislature."

The Idamont Hotel dining room was the scene for the Democratic victory dinner on December 10. Gilbert Larsen, Democratic county

chairman, was master of ceremonies. Tickets cost \$1. Those elected to the various offices were honored with Arnold Williams being singled out as "honored guest."

On December 12 Representative Porter and Senator Graham visited the state asylum at Blackfoot. Porter must have been appalled at conditions under which many of those institutionalized lived. The facility was considerably overcrowded and understaffed. Although several buildings were new and well equipped, several were old with terrible plumbing and grossly inadequate heating. Porter and Graham had gone to Blackfoot to appraise the situation at the asylum so they could speak with authority if bills were presented in the legislature dealing with the institution. They accomplished their purpose.

Representative Porter was especially concerned with the educational system in the county and state. He spent considerable time assessing public opinion concerning the issue before he left for Boise on January 6, 1945.

Porter was sworn into office on January 8. He was appointed to the appropriations, legislative expense, and printing committees of the Twenty-eighth Legislature.

Representative Porter introduced one of the first bills in the house, House Bill No. 13. Porter had noticed that attention was paid to maintaining good highways in the state with one glaring exception. Too often those county and state highways leading to cemeteries were sadly neglected. House Bill No. 13 purposed to rectify the situation by mandating that roads leading to cemeteries receive attention along with other state and county roads. The bill passed both houses unanimously and was signed by Governor Gossett on February 20, 1945.

Representative Porter introduced House Bill No. 69 relating to the newspaper business. The Idaho code mandated that on a specified day of the week legal notices would be published. That worked all right for daily papers which never took a holiday but created legal problems for weekly newspapers which often were published a day early or a day late when a legal holiday was observed and thus missed the day when legal notices were to be published. Porter's bill amended the Idaho code to include the stipulation "that when said day of the week falls on a legal holiday on which the said newspaper does not publish a regular issue, all such legal notices intended for publication on that day may be

published on the next following or preceding business day, and such notice so published shall be deemed to have been published once per week." The bill was unanimously passed by the house. It was slightly revised in the senate, then passed unanimously. The governor signed it into law on March 16.

The Twenty-eighth Legislature dealt with old age pensions, liquor by the drink, the primary election law, air traffic, closing Albion Normal School, advancing the Southern Branch of the University of Idaho to four-year status, slot machines, parimutuel betting, raising the gasoline tax for highway building, weed eradication, labor laws, veterans benefits, school reorganization, and some 175 other items.

Of most importance to Madison County was the debate over the schools. The outcome of that one was to raise the legal limit for the tax levy to four mills. Also, more money was appropriated to aid school districts to raise teacher salaries. And, in a time-honored fashion when a problem appears overwhelming, the legislature appointed a committee. The legislature appropriated \$50,000 for a committee study of Idaho schools, primary through university.

Representative Porter returned home from the legislative session confident he had represented his constituency well. There seemed to be no apparent opposition to that confidence.

The twenty-eighth session of the Idaho Legislature was called into two extraordinary sessions early in 1946 and Porter was back in Boise. The first session convened on February 25 at 12:00 noon. Arnold Williams, who had become Idaho's governor when Charles C. Gossett appointed himself to fill a United States Senate vacancy, had the dubious honor of trying to cope with a multitude of post-war problems. The extraordinary sessions were the beginning of the coping process. Porter voted with the majority on a ten-item agenda which included, among other things, veterans rights, appropriation for various departments of state, and dealing with the educational situation. The session adjourned March 7 at 10:00 a.m. and the second session immediately commenced. The second session dealt with a single issue — amend the Idaho Constitution so that members of the legislature could be paid \$10 per day and ten cents per mile travel to and from Boise. The members of the session quickly acceded by a joint resolution which called for the matter to be voted on by the electorate

at the next election. The session adjourned on March 7 just a few hours after it convened. That was to end Porter's legislative career although he did not know it at the time.

Porter announced his candidacy for another term in the state House of Representatives early in June 1946. "Always during a long experience in public affairs I have endeavored to give careful and prompt consideration and support to the interests and wishes of all our citizens — farmers, teachers, laborers, merchants, the senior citizens, professional people — and to all sections of the county. I like them all," he said. "I shall appreciate your vote."

Perhaps some indication of dissatisfaction with Porter surfaced when he was challenged in the primary election by William C. Roberts. It was a close contest but Porter won 585 votes to 435 for Roberts. Porter would run against Sterling Magleby of Archer who was unopposed in the primary on the Republican ticket.

The Madison County Central Democratic Committee stumped hard for Porter. "Arthur Porter is a candidate for re-election as representative from Madison County," they proclaimed. "He has served in the legislature as a member of several committees and has a working knowledge of the affairs of the state. As a member of the legislature, he has been watchful of the interests of Madison County and was active in promoting beneficial legislation for his constituents. His public record is well known in this community."

Porter campaigned on his record of working for the public good, especially on the cemetery issue. He was promoted as an experienced legislator who was sensitive to the wishes of his constituents. His service to the county and community were rehearsed, including his tenure at Ricks College, city councilman, and mayor of Rexburg during the depression, and his role in city park beautification.

His past record was not quite enough to get him elected at a time of state and national resentment with post-war inflation, shortages, labor demands, veterans returning to the work force, etc. The Democratic Party was blamed for the problems although they really had little control over events. The trend was for a change and, in a close election, that sentiment would spell defeat for a Democrat. Out of 3,366 votes cast, Porter lost by forty-four votes. The unofficial returns showed Porter carrying the following precincts: Canyon Creek,

Hibbard, Moody, and Rexburg First, Second, and Third. Magleby carried Archer, Independence, Lyman, Rexburg Fourth, Salem, Sugar City, and Thornton. Each man had sixty-four votes in the Moody Precinct.

Porter was certainly disappointed. He was especially upset that the "Allied Civic Forces" organization had not endorsed him. He had supported their causes for several years. With their endorsement, he likely would have won. Despite his disappointment, he graciously issued a statement expressing "my appreciation to the people of Madison County for the support I received in the election just past and for former elections. I feel that I have been honored by them on several occasions for which I am most thankful."

Porter would try again for state office in 1954. He ran unopposed in the primary on the Democratic ticket for state senator. He received 1,223 votes in the primary. His Republican opponent, J. Kenneth Thatcher, the incumbent state senator, was also unopposed in the primary but garnered only 852 votes. Porter had to feel some confidence noting that more had voted the Democratic than the Republican ticket in the primary. However, there was still the general election ahead.

Porter campaigned out of the Democratic headquarters located in the Idamont Hotel. A political advertisement touted his experience noting that he "voted consistently for all legislation helpful to farmers, for legislation to help the schools and teachers (including the retirement law), and for welfare assistance for the aged, the sick, and dependent children. [He] took a leading part in any law affecting the welfare of Madison County including our cemetery law, our hospital law, etc., and was the sponsor of several beneficial laws on the statute books. [He] has a long experience in public service and understands the needs of Madison County. [He is] conservative and careful in expenditure of public funds." He is a "member of the first Commercial Club organized in Rexburg, published the *Rexburg Journal* for more than forty years, founded Porter's Book Store, [and] has taken part in the civic and church activities of Madison County since and before its organization."

Thatcher was popular and had the advantage of incumbency along with a decided national and state Republican political control. There

were undoubtedly some who considered Porter's age a drawback. He was seventy-eight years old. Others looked upon him as a token candidate whom even the Democrats did not expect to win but needed for the ticket.

When the votes were counted, Porter lost to Thatcher by a vote of 1,629 to 2,208. Porter carried the Hibbard precinct by eight votes and the Rexburg First Precinct by fourteen votes. The other precincts registered majorities for Thatcher. Porter was probably not too surprised at the election results, but he was undoubtedly disappointed that his precinct, the Rexburg First, had not supported him to a greater extent.

By 1954 both Rexburg newspapers, the *Standard* and the *Journal*, were owned by the Porter family. (The *Standard-Journal* had been published out of the same office since November 1953.) This created some problems as the *Journal* was traditionally the Democratic newspaper while the *Standard* was traditionally the Republican newspaper. Keith Kost, editor of the *Standard and Journal*, indicated the problem in his "Along the Main Drag" column: "The election has come and gone with the usual results — about half the candidates lost! It was quite exciting (depending on which party you happened to be rooting for) and had the usual amount of surprises as well as a certain number of things that went according to the dopesters. Of course, everyone has his own ideas about the whole blooming thing. Speaking as a member of the Republican *Standard* staff, I can say I was very well pleased with the results of the state races and not too pleased on the county level. But, speaking as a member of the Democratic *Journal* staff, I was tickled pink about the local races [except Porter's defeat] and a little disappointed with the state ticket results. Speaking as a Sunday Independent — I ain't speaking. (Incidentally, folks, my wife is sure glad this here election is over, and I don't have to keep switching politics in the middle of the week. She says I wasted too much time every morning having to shave both faces!)"

The 1954 state senatorial race was Porter's last foray into state politics. He did remain active in Democratic Party politics as a precinct committeeman. He was undoubtedly one of the senior Democrats in the state in terms of longevity in the party. He had served and continued to serve the party well.



Last three children, Margaret, Mary Nell & Ann

12

County Superintendent of Schools 1949-1953

On the agenda for the county commission meeting of August 8, 1949, was the resignation of Willis J. Lyman as county superintendent of schools. He had recently accepted the Rexburg Postmaster appointment. Porter had wanted the postmaster appointment, but he was over the maximum age limit of sixty-three. The clerk, F. L. Davis, read the letter of resignation and the commissioners, William I. Holley, chairman, Harry Graham, and Emil Nef, voted to accept Lyman's resignation. Because the community already knew of Lyman's postmaster appointment and his resignation from the education post, three individuals had made application to the county commission for the position. They were Porter, H. Lester Petersen, and Merle Fisher. Porter had the initial support of Graham, but he knew that he had to have one more commissioner on his side. County Democratic Party chairman Gilbert Larsen would lobby for Porter.

While the lobbying was underway by the supporters of each candidate, Porter was busy with a school project. On July 11 he had attended a school board meeting and agreed to help organize a campaign to pass a \$350,000 bond election to build a gymnasium in Rexburg and an elementary school near Thornton. He was "asked to get the matter before the Relief Societies." Porter worked especially hard

in the first precinct and could note with satisfaction that, "under my direction, the first precinct was thoroughly canvassed and brought in a good vote. The rest of the town was poorly organized so less than half of the Rexburg vote was polled." Rexburg voted more than four to one in favor of the bond, but the outlying areas were strongly opposed and the proposition was defeated.

At the August 8 meeting, the commission could not reach a decision on whom to appoint so they decided to make the appointment at the next meeting. That meeting took place on Monday, September 12. There was some concern that, since Porter was seventy-three years old, he was past the mandatory retirement age for public school educators and thus could not qualify for a teaching certificate. The commission decided a teaching certificate was unnecessary for the office, and Commissioner Graham moved that Porter be appointed. Nef seconded the motion, and Holley voted with the two to make the appointment unanimous.

The timing for Porter could not have been better. "Mr. Porter has been active throughout his life in civic and church affairs," noted the *Rexburg Standard*. "He was editor of the *Rexburg Journal* until two years ago when he sold his interest to his son Arthur C. Porter. He owned and operated Porter's Book Store until last spring when he sold his interests in that business to his youngest son Warren Porter." Additionally, "He has had considerable teaching experience. He holds a bachelor of science degree and taught at Madison High School and Ricks College. He was in the teaching profession when he first came to Rexburg. He has long been interested in educational matters."

He was sworn into office on September 13, 1949, and filed a bond. He moved into the superintendent's office the next day, and was employed at a salary of \$2,700 annually for the part-time job. Joan Harris was his half-time typist/receptionist.

Porter's responsibilities were many and varied. Porter delineated those responsibilities in a letter to Beryl E. Clem, Nez Perce County School Superintendent, Lewiston, Idaho, in late March 1953. Clem had written on March 5 asking for information needed for a study of the office of county superintendent in the state.

Madison County was fully reorganized with two Class A districts, Nos. 321 and 322. The county superintendent did not employ and pay teachers.

He did some visiting and supervising in common schools but did not have direct control but was secondary to the district superintendent. He apportioned county general and state funds to the two districts. He received the term reports from all teachers of the county, also the budget estimates and financial reports from the district superintendents and made up the minimum program requirements for the county and the annual financial and statistical reports for the county.

The county superintendent was the clerk of the board of education and practically the executive officer of the board. As such, he prepared the budget and estimated the levy and, when this was approved, filed the levy with the county commissioners of the counties involved (in our case, Madison and Fremont). The county superintendent, acting for the board, looked after supervising the bus transportation program, seeing that drivers are capable, in good health, etc., and that all buses were maintained in good condition, reports being filed monthly. The county superintendent registered all teachers and kept a record of their teacher certificates, contracts, grades or subjects taught; also recorded their health certificates. In this connection, he kept teachers informed as to when certificates should be renewed.

In this county the superintendent served as attendance officer. Occasional visits to schools were made checking sanitary conditions, health, attendance, fire hazards, etc. Our board provided funds for employment of a county nurse and, in cooperation with the county commissioners and state department of health, employed a registered nurse and provided a good health program.

The superintendent made up and filed with the state the annual and statistical reports of the schools of the county, also made up the minimum program sheet on which Madison County's share of the state equalization fund (approximately \$125,000 annually) was based. This money and the county general fund (an eight mill levy) was apportioned to the two districts by the superintendent. The superintendent registered all teachers of the county and saw that the law was complied with as to qualifications; also maintained office hours for the convenience of teachers.

Just two days after assuming the superintendent's position, Porter called on J. Kenneth Thatcher, superintendent of Sugar-Salem schools, and Ezra Stucki, superintendent of Rexburg schools, and received from them promises of cooperation. They supplied Porter with copies of all their teachers' contracts.

On September 28 Porter attended a district school meeting in Idaho Falls. He had sent letters encouraging all members of the county board of education and school bus drivers to attend the meeting to hear the superintendent of Los Angeles schools speak. Porter, at least,

was impressed, probably more so than the school bus drivers. Porter talked to Alton Jones, state superintendent of schools, at the meeting about getting a teaching certificate. He had not had a current certificate for several years. Jones referred him to Ross E. Barney, assistant state superintendent. Jones probably did not want to break the news that Porter was too old to get a teaching certificate. Barney broke the news.

Porter's office was frugal with public money. His first financial statement early in February 1950 showed that, as of January 9, the account of the county board of education had a surplus of \$4,501.41. A pattern of fiscal responsibility was quickly established.

Superintendent Porter was in Boise on March 6 and 7, 1950, to attend the annual meeting of the Idaho School Trustees' Association. He had been accompanied by Ellis Gardner, president of the Madison County Trustees' Association. The two men participated in debate and voting on several resolutions to be presented to the next session of the Idaho Legislature. Four resolutions were considered by Porter and Gardner to be especially important. The first advocated "that each school district prepare a budget for publication each year in the same way that the county budgets are prepared and published. Such procedure would inform the public of the proposed school expenditures for the following year."

The second resolution called for the state to "adopt a more suitable method of apportioning the state transportation fund to give rural and sparsely settled counties increased revenues to improve their roads. Such improvement of transportation facilities would give more equal educational opportunities to all children of the state."

The third asked that a "state building supervisor be added to the state school board to assist in planning new building programs. Such a supervisor would not be a professional engineer but would be a man of experience."

The fourth resolution had classroom teachers in mind in "advocating provisions for a more adequate financing program on the state level. This would be achieved either by raising the allowance for average daily attendance and classroom units, or by reducing the size of the classroom units. This latter alternative would increase state funds received by the counties inasmuch as the counties receive a certain

amount according to the number of units. Smaller units would mean more units and thus more funds."

The Madison County Board of Education held a meeting in the courthouse Monday evening, April 3, 1950. The board was composed of Herman Walz, chairman, C. C. Parkinson, Gerald Larsen, Leroy Mortensen, and Lynn Morris. Porter was the clerk of the board. Porter presented a written report of the Boise meeting which was approved by the board. He presented March inspection reports for all school buses. The reports showed the buses in good condition and drivers competent. Some concerns were discussed about some bus routes where the buses were overcrowded, also, some routes covered what was considered excessive distance. The board decided to look into additional bus service for the next school year.

Mrs. Leona Weiand, the county health nurse, was present at the meeting and reported that a health program had been in place since January. Health clinics, under the supervision of the county physician, Dr. W. L. Sutherland, had been set up in each school and all children through the fifth grade had been immunized for whooping cough, diphtheria, and smallpox. The appointment of a county health nurse was largely due to Porter's insistence. There had been no county nurse for about three years before Weiand's appointment in November 1949. The last item of business was a rather cursory examination of the health and science textbooks which had been adopted.

Early in August, at Porter's urging, the board of education asked the county commissioners to turn money in the county board of education account over to the board of education. The commissioners agreed that the board of education should administer their own account and that the county commission should not keep the account in their office. Later Porter would ask the commission to discontinue printing claims of the board of education in commission minutes. The commission agreed that the claims were unnecessary in commission minutes since the education money was in the board of education account and the claims against the money appeared in Porter's records.

The board of education met in the courthouse on December 11. Reports were made on state educational matters, reduction in numbers of students in elementary schools from thirty to twenty-eight per classroom, appointing an attendance officer for Madison County, and an

increase in the mill levy. The board also considered appointment of a county superintendent as Porter's appointment expired as of January 1, 1951. The board agreed to reappoint Porter until March 1, 1951, when the matter would be considered again. When the matter was reconsidered in March, he was reappointed until January 1, 1953.

On Monday, January 29, 1951, the board of education met and discussed the recent message of the governor calling for a \$3 million reduction in the state school equalization fund and state transportation apportionment to the schools. The board went on record as opposing any reduction. "The proposed changes, they felt, would not reduce cost of these schools but only shift the bill from the state where it is equally distributed to the counties and districts where it would be borne unequally."

Also considered at the meeting was a matter which had come to Porter's attention concerning "occasional boisterous conduct" on school buses and some "unruly students" refusing to obey the bus driver. The board decided that school superintendents were to be made aware of those who refused to follow the rules. The superintendent was to deny transportation on buses to those students "until arrangements could be made with the parents to assist in proper behavior on the part of students."

Because there was some public question about the state equalization school fund, Porter explained what it was: "The state equalization school fund is an amount of money made available by the state to assist school districts that are unable to maintain a satisfactory educational program by local taxation." The fund was especially helpful for districts with little tax base. "The law requires that the districts each levy five mills to pay" for the minimum educational program according to state law, Porter explained. "If that does not produce enough [money], the county must levy up to eight mills to pay whatever the districts are short. If this still does not pay the cost of the minimum program, the state must pay the balance out of the state equalization fund."

Porter summarized the board's opposition to any reduction in the equalization fund. "The proposed cut of \$3 million from the state's appropriation to the public schools is not a saving. It is shifting the burden from the state to the poorer districts and on to taxpayers who

already have the heavy burden. The state gets its revenue principally from income taxes, cigarette tax, punch boards, liquor, whereas the district can only levy on property. Reduction of the state equalization appropriation can only result in raising the levy on property of local districts."

Porter took care of the allocation to the county board of education and could show a surplus of \$6,937.64 in March 1952. By January 14, 1953, the office had a surplus of \$13,778.29.

The board of education in January 1953 was composed of Ellis Gardner, chairman, Alton Anderson, vice-chairman, Ronald Hill, treasurer, Lynn Morris, and James Rydalch. Porter, who was up for reappointment as of January 1, was still the executive secretary without any formal reappointment. The board could see no reason to formalize an appointment because they realized that the county board of education could be terminated pending what the state legislature did with the state's educational system.

At the January 5, 1953, meeting, at the urging of Porter, the board authorized the teaching of a citizenship class at Madison High School if enough people in the community were interested. Many were and Porter became the teacher. Many remember him fondly for his teaching the rudiments of citizenship which aided those interested in becoming citizens of the United States. The Japanese-American Organization presented him with a commemorative plaque. This turned out to be Porter's most enduring accomplishment while county superintendent of schools.

On March 10 Porter traveled to Idaho Falls with a delegation of educators from Rexburg and the area to listen to legislators explain the recent changes made in the state's education system. The legislation, which had a direct effect on Porter, was that which abolished the office of county superintendent of schools. On June 30 the office would be officially closed. By the new organization, the "duties of the board and the superintendent will be transferred to the state board of education, the county auditor, and the department of education."

Porter attended the county commission meeting on April 13 to inquire "as to what disposition should be made of the several items of furniture and supplies in the county superintendent's office after it was abolished. It was unanimously approved that the furniture and fixtures

should be turned over to the county clerk and the supplies should be given to the schools."

A notice appeared in the *Rexburg Standard* that "the money on hand at the time the board is dissolved will be divided between the two school districts in the county." This notice caused some confusion and called for a retraction in a subsequent edition. "In the report it was stated that the money would go to the two school districts in the county. This made it appear that the boards of the two districts would receive the money which is incorrect. The money will be turned over to the county and placed in the county school fund."

The last official meeting of the county board of education was held on Monday night, June 29. The only item of business was the disposition of claims against the budget. Porter was in the process of "closing the books, making final reports to the state, reporting taxes, and turning over the functions of the office to other agencies." Those items would be attended to "as soon as practicable."

Porter made a last appearance at the county commission meeting on July 13, 1953, to present the "board of county commissioners with a check to pay the salary of the county nurse until her contract expires in September." That detail fulfilled the last of Porter's responsibilities as county superintendent of schools.

13

Conclusion

The Ricks College Leadership Week was in session June 5, 6, and 7, 1967. Porter, typically, was in attendance. He tried to attend as many sessions as possible. His daughters Ann and Margaret also were in attendance. Ann tells the story: "We went into the class on 'How to Tell Your Children About Sex.' The class was in the Romney Building auditorium. We were sitting up on the back and Margaret nudged me and said, 'That's Daddy down there.' I said, 'My gosh, he just built that family room; he is in here because we are going to have more family.' We had a good laugh. That night we went to see Mama and Dad, and we were talking about the session. Dad said, 'I was so tired today I just couldn't move to get up and leave the class. I'd been in there to a genealogy lecture and there was going to be another one in there next. I thought, I can't leave; I've got to just sit here. I'm too tired to move.' So we gave him a bad time, but he had told us the real reason he was there. Then, in the night, he had a stroke that was crippling."

Porter was critically ill but would recover enough to insist on at least a semblance of his usual routine. He was eventually able to go downtown with assistance. He dressed in suit and tie as he had done all his life. But, clearly, his almost legendary energy was languishing.

He had trouble communicating. He was still interested in many things and still liked to read books. Margaret "went over to help Mama," she said, "and I noticed that Daddy was in the middle of reading *Pride and Prejudice* which hit me kind of funny. He could still talk a little bit, and I said, 'Do you want me to read the book to you?' He just nodded, so I read it to him, and I got interested in it again. I know I've read it nine or ten times too. I couldn't help but think, at ninety-two years of age, I don't know if I'll still be reading *Pride and Prejudice*."

Porter suffered another stroke in mid-December. His long and extraordinarily productive life came to an end on Saturday morning, December 30, 1967. He was ninety-two years old.

Funeral services for Arthur Porter, Jr., were held in the first ward chapel under the direction of the Flamm Funeral Home. Bishop Vernon Edstrom conducted. The family prayer was offered by son-in-law Marriner D. Morrell. Dorothy Ashcraft played the prelude and postlude music. The opening hymn, "Not Now but in the Coming Years," was sung by a quartet composed of George Patterson, Kay Wilkins, Chester Hill, and George Catmull. They were accompanied by Nina Wilkins. Terrell Arnold, another son-in-law, offered the invocation.

Mary Smith Oldham, the family lawyer and close friend, read the obituary in which she stated: "Sixty-six years have passed forever out of the lives of men since Arthur Porter came to Rexburg and put his shoulders to the wheel of progress in this community." She then gave a brief summary of Porter's life. She concluded by quoting W. Lloyd Adams, "Arthur Porter was a great American. As I review his life now, it is hard to conceive that one man could have accomplished so much in a lifetime. He was not just an item of the community, but had the lion's strength of matured effort and action. He was more than an individual. He was a human institution. He had a great capacity to deal with men — to unite and coordinate the community in a great cause. Rexburg will never be the same as we walk down the streets because Arthur Porter will not be there."

Speakers were John L. Clarke, president of Ricks College, and Bishop Franklin M. Stevens, both of whom eulogized Porter. President Clarke said, among other things, that Porter "was genuine and without affectation. He went about and did his work quietly and mostly without

fanfare. He was courageous and not afraid to take a stand on what he considered the right even if it were unpopular. He was by nature meditative, thoughtful, and able to get to the heart of a problem. He was tolerant and understanding of others and seemed to feel at home with men of all circumstances. He was extremely generous in giving of himself and his means in promoting good causes. He was a man of faith and, as a spiritual leader, combined a practical mind with spiritual sensitivity. Finally, Brother Porter knew that man is eternal, that we, all of us, are living in the midst of eternity."

Venese Leishman sang a solo: "One Fleeting Hour." Bishop Edstrom spoke briefly followed by the male quartet singing "I Need Thee Every Hour." Raymond McEntire, a friend and long-time associate in city government, pronounced the benediction.

Burial was in the Rexburg Cemetery. The dedicatory prayer was by son-in-law Ronald Clarke. Flowers were under the direction of the first ward Relief Society assisted by Porter's granddaughters and great-granddaughters. Pallbearers were grandsons Roger O. Porter, Randall Porter, Dennis Gifford, Alan Porter, David Clarke, Walter Baranowski, John Austin Porter, and Keith Arthur Zollinger.

To find perseverance, courage, intelligence, and vision in the same person must surely be unusual. The Rexburg community learned early on that to get something done well and quickly, call on Porter. That reputation quickly spread beyond the community to the county and state. In the 103-year history of Rexburg, no single man has, in the opinion of the author, left his mark on the city as has Arthur Porter, Jr.

Porter's reputation has been distilled and preserved by this biography. But it can only be perpetuated by his progeny.



Front row - Gertrude Gifford, Margaret Arnold, Arthur, Nelle, Ann Zollinger
Back row - Louise Clarke, Jessie Morrell, John Porter, Warren Porter, Art Porter, Mary Nelle B. Harris, Virginia Howell

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Apr. 20, 1876	Arthur Porter, Jr. born Auckland, New Zealand
Apr. 27, 1884	Baptized LDS Church, Alford Forest, New Zealand
July 16, 1885	Left Christchurch, New Zealand, for Auckland
July 21, 1885	Boarded ship <i>Zealandia</i> in Auckland to travel to America (San Francisco)
Sept. 1885	Family settled in Brigham City, Utah
1886 or 1887	Moved to Willard, Utah
1889	Moved to Logan, Utah
1890	Enrolled in Preparatory Course, Brigham Young College, Logan, Utah
1891	Enrolled at Agricultural College, Logan, Utah
1892	Enrolled at Brigham Young College, Logan, Utah
1896	Graduated from Brigham Young College with bachelor's degree

Dec. 4, 1896	Set apart as missionary for European mission (served in Switzerland)
June 1899	Released from mission
Summer 1899	Attended University of Geneva, Switzerland
Fall 1899	Returned to USA to begin teaching school in Lewiston, Utah
Summer 1900	Worked at Eccles Lumber Mill, Baker, Oregon
1900-02	Taught school Oneida Stake Academy, Preston, Idaho
Nov. 7, 1900	Married Gertrude Paull, Logan LDS Temple
Aug. 1901	Appointed to Oneida County Board of Education
1901-02	Served as secretary to Principal Edwin Cutler
1901-02	Sunday School Superintendent, Preston Ward
1901-02	MIA President, Preston Ward
1901	Purchased one-third interest in <i>Preston Standard</i> (newspaper)
Summer 1902	Attended summer school at Brigham Young College; received bachelor of divinity degree
1902	Sold interest in <i>Preston Standard</i>
Fall 1902	Moved to Rexburg, Idaho
1902-16	Taught at Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho (full-time)
1902-05	Superintendent, Fremont Stake Academy Sunday School
Apr. 26, 1904	Bought land (lot 2, block 22) for first house
Nov. 5, 1905-21	Superintendent, Rexburg First Ward Sunday School
Jan. 29, 1906	Charter Member, Rexburg Commercial Club
Apr. 10, 1906	Wife Gertrude Paull Porter died

Summer 1907	Attended school, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah
Feb. 10, 1908	Bought newspaper <i>Current Journal</i> in partnership with brother Frank Porter
June 24, 1908	Married Nelle Child, Salt Lake LDS Temple
1909	Bought house at 205 East Main Street
July 1909	Member Pioneer Days Executive Committee
1911	Member Commercial Club Advertising Committee
July 5, 1911	Secretary, Fremont Fair Association
Mar. 14, 1912	Secretary, Fremont Fair Board
1912	Leased Flamm's Opera House with Lloyd Adams
1913	Bought Frank Porter's share of newspaper
1913	Member Madison County Committee to establish new county
1913-18	Rexburg City Councilman
Nov. 1913-21	Member Madison County Fair Association Executive Committee
June 18, 1916	Delegate State Democratic Convention
1916	Member of committee to establish and pave College Avenue
1916	Bought business location on College Avenue
July 14, 1916	Incorporated Rexburg Investment Company, Ltd. along with eight others
1916	Built Eccles (Idamont) Hotel with partners
1916	Bought Squires Book Store on College Avenue. Renamed it Porter's Book Store
1916	Ran unsuccessfully for Madison County Superintendent of Public Instruction

1917	Assistant Chief Clerk, Idaho House of Representative
Sept. 6, 1917	Incorporated Rexburg Building & Construction Company, Ltd., along with thirteen others
Nov. 20, 1917	Incorporated Rexburg Home Builders, Ltd.
1917-18	Chairman Madison County Food Administration
1917-18	Member State Executive Committee of US Food Administration
1917-18	Member Madison County Council of Defense
Jan. 1918	Chairman Madison County "Smilage" Campaign (Military Entertainment Council)
Sept. 1918	Executive Committee, Home Service Branch, Red Cross
1919	Chairman Commercial Club Censorship Committee
1920	Chairman Madison County American Legion Endowment Campaign
Jan. 15, 1920	Filed Articles of Incorporation Rexburg Building & Loan Company (fifty-four members). Formal incorporation of group which built several buildings on College Avenue and houses
1921-67	Member Rotary Club
Feb. 1922	Changed name <i>Current Journal</i> to <i>Rexburg Journal</i>
Apr. 7, 1924	Elected officer in Porter Surname Association
1924-25	Taught French at Ricks College
1925-26	Taught German at Ricks College
Sept. 27, 1925-31	Second Counselor Fremont Stake Presidency
1925	Member Rexburg Rotary Club Board of Directors and Second Vice-President
1925	Member Commercial Club Pageant Committee and Prosperity Days

1926-45	Member Ricks College Board of Education Executive Committee
1926-28	District Chairman, Madison County Representative Teton Peaks Council, Boy Scouts of America
1926-32	Vice-president (one of five), Teton Peaks Council, Boy Scouts
Jan. 26, 1927	Member Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
1927-38	Member Idaho Falls LDS Hospital Board of Directors
Sept. 1, 1927	Lease on Eccles Hotel not renewed; Building & Loan Company with Porter president assumed management
Feb. 6, 1928	Porter and others incorporated Idamont Hotel; President of Board of Directors
1928	Ran unsuccessfully for Idaho State Treasurer on Democratic ticket
1928-29	Taught French at Ricks College
1929-35	Mayor Rexburg, Idaho (three terms)
1929	Member Chamber of Commerce committee for support of county projects
Apr. 8, 1930	Met with LDS Church leaders in Salt Lake City regarding status of Ricks College
May 1930	Chairman Distinguished Guests and Speakers Committee, Whoopee Days celebration
Aug. 1930	Madison County Delegate to State Democratic Convention
1930	Rexburg Building and Loan Company liquidated assets; Porter one of trustees
1930	Cleared out old city park; planned and supervised planting of new city park
1931	Lobbied in Boise for State of Idaho to take over Ricks College
1931-45	First Counselor, Fremont (later Rexburg) Stake Presidency

222 *Chronological History*

1932	Chairman committee to administer RFC (relief) funds for city and county
June 25, 1932	Organized Rexburg Sales Company
1933-34	Member Madison County Federal Re-employment Committee
1933	Chairman, County Relief Committee
Jan. 1933	Again lobbied Idaho Legislature to take over Ricks College
Feb. 9, 1933	Officially incorporated Rexburg Sales Company (Porter's Book Store incorporation)
Mar. 1933	Met with Church Commissioner of Education regarding future of Ricks College
Mar. 1933	Member Finance Committee for operating Ricks College under direct control of local board of education
1934	Member Pioneer Monument Committee
1934	Chairman President's (Roosevelt) Birthday Ball
1935	Chairman Madison County Citizens Committee to administer federal relief funds
Jan. 1935	Again lobbied Idaho Legislature to take over Ricks College
June 23, 1935	Fremont Stake name changed to Rexburg Stake
Apr. 26, 1936-45	Chairman Rexburg Stake Welfare Committee
Jan. 1937	Again lobbied Idaho Legislature to take over Ricks College (turned down)
1938	Executive Committee abolished as Church takes over administration of college

1943	Member Madison County Public Assistance Council
Jan. 1944	Member Madison County Fourth Ward Loan Drive Committee
June 1944	Member Madison County Fifth Ward Loan Drive Committee
1944	Member Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee
1945	Member Victory Loan Drive Committee
1946	Ran for third term Idaho House of Representatives (defeated)
1947	Sold <i>Rexburg Journal</i> to son Arthur C. Porter
Sept. 17, 1948-50	Member Madison County Hospital Advisory Board
1949	Trip to New York City to attend Rotary International meetings
1949-63	Secretary/Treasurer, Rexburg Chamber of Commerce
1949	Sold Porter's Book Store to son Warren C. Porter
1949-53	Madison County Superintendent of Schools
1950	Directed Rotary Club's Community Chest Fund Drive
Jan. 22, 1951	Member Madison County Council of Public Assistance
Mar. 27, 1951	Chairman Madison County Civil Defense Unit Personnel Committee
May 1952	City park officially named Arthur Porter, Jr. Park
1952	Trip to Hawaii
1953	Teacher, County Citizenship Class
1954	Ran unsuccessfully for state senator
1954	Chairman Rotary Club Bulletin and History Committee
May 24, 1962	Presented Distinguished Service Award by Ricks College

- Dec. 11, 1963 Arthur Porter Lecture Room in David O. McKay Library designated
- 1965 Awarded honorary life membership in Rotary Club
- June 1967 Suffered stroke
- Dec. 30, 1967 Died
- Jan. 31, 1968 Awarded posthumously Madison County Hall of Fame Award
Rexburg Chamber of Commerce

I designed and supervised the planting of this park, when I was mayor, in 1930. Last summer the present mayor and council named it the "Arthur Porter Park" in my honor. I was surprised and embarrassed when I heard the announcement over the radio one morning. Of course, I greatly appreciated the recognition, and now am accustomed to hearing my name used when entertainments, games, and other functions are announced at this recreation center.



Porter building on College Avenue.



PORTER'S BOOK STORE

DATE

Oct 4 1932

CASH AT CLOSE OF DAY:

Currency	-	-	\$	5.00
Checks	-	-	\$	
Dollars	-	-	\$	7.00
Halves	-	-	\$	1.00
Quarters	-	-	\$	3.00
Dimes	-	-	\$	1.70
Nickles	-	-	\$.70
Pennies	-	-	\$	1.06
Total Cash	-	-	\$	19.46
Payouts	-	-	\$	10.36
Bank Deposits	-	-	\$	63.73
TOTAL	-	-	\$	89.55
Cash at opening of Day	-	-	\$	34.54
Day's Receipts	-	-	\$	55.32
TOTAL	-	-	\$	89.76
Over	-	-	\$	
Short	-	-	\$.21
Remarks				

Checkout sheet for early days of Porter's Bookstore



Arthur with missionary companions.

Stake Office and LDS Stake Tabernacle.





Back - Virginia and Gertrude, Front - Louise, Arthur and John.

Mary Nell, Margaret, Ann and Jessie Claire.



Graduating Recital

...by...

Nell Child

...assisted by...

Earl H. Behrends

Baritone

Artist Course

Saturday, May Twelfth

Nineteen Hundred and Six

at eight thirty o'clock

London Conservatory

Chas. W. London, Director

263 Live Oak St.

Dallas, Texas

...Program...

Beethoven..... Sonata, Op. 31, No. 3

(a) Allegro

(b) Allegretto

(c) Minuetto

(d) Presto con fuoco

Cowen..... Border Ballad, (vocal)

Chopin..... Mazurka, F sharp mi., Op. 6, No. 1

Chopin..... Etude, G flat, Op. 25, No. 9

Scambati..... Nenia, Op. 18, No. 3

Fosti..... Serenata, (vocal)

MacDowell..... To a Wild Rose, Op. 47, No. 1

MacDowell..... To a Water Lilly, Op. 47, No. 6

MacDowell..... Shadow Dance Op. 39, No. 8

Liszt..... Rhapsodie, No. VIII

Pinsuti..... Bedouin Love Song, (vocal)

Mozart..... Concerto in C mi., Allegro (two pianos)

MISS LOUISE GEORGE AT SECOND PIANO.

LYERS & PONS PIANO USED

Nell's graduating recital



Arthur and brothers and sisters. Front row - Minnie, Rebecca. Middle row - Emily, Nellie, Louise, mother, Elizabeth, Arthur, Sr., father. Back row - Clem, Tom, Frank, Fred, Arthur, Jr., George.



Arthur Porter and brothers. Front Row - Fred, Clem, Arthur, Frank
Back Row - George and Tom.

Main Street looking East



OFFICE OF

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Madison County

ARTHUR PORTER
COUNTY SUPT. OF SCHOOLS

REGULAR OFFICE DAYS
SECOND MONDAY EACH MONTH
AND EVERY FRIDAY

REXBURG, IDAHO

ARTHUR PORTER
REPRESENTATIVE, MADISON COUNTY

HOME ADDRESS:
REXBURG, IDAHO

COMMITTEES:

PRINTING

STATE INSTITUTIONS

State of Idaho

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

BOISE



Gertrude Paull (first wife of Arthur)

Virginia and Jessie





Home on corner of Main and 2nd East.



Arthur in classroom at Ricks Academy

Margaret Arnold standing in Oneida Stake Academy; Preston, Idaho





Louise and John

*Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Porter, Sr.
request the pleasure of
your company*

at an

Open House

in honour of their

Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary

Saturday, the twenty-eighth of June

from four to nine o'clock

at their home

Two hundred five East Main Street

Rexburg, Idaho

(No Gifts)

1908

1958



Arthur, wife Gertrude, Virginia, Jessie and Florence Porter (sister)

Arthur, Jessie and Virginia at grave of first wife, Gertrude Paull





50th anniversary of Rexburg Commercial Club



Jessie and Art



Arthur gardening, East side of house

John and Mary Nell



Ann





Arthur and Nell's first house, old tithing office, corner of 1st North and 2nd East.

Stake Presidency: Peter J. Ricks, Counselor; George Romney, President; Arthur Porter, Counselor.





Nellie Porter (sister) at family organ



Frank Porter (brother) at letterpress, Rexburg Journal



Arthur with his mother, four of his daughters and first grandchild. Back row - Jessie and Arthur. Front Row - Ann, Mary Nell, Margaret, Grandma Porter, Jessie Claire Morrell



Grandchildren with grandpa. circa 1947

Family reunion. circa 1961





Working in beet field for war effort.
Back row - Lorin Kauer, Grace Smith,
John Kauer, Arthur, Mary Nell, Ann.
Front row - Faye Smith, Gene Smith,
Larry Smith

Granny Child



Nelle and Arthur 1945

Margaret and Jessie Claire
Morrell 1938





West side of family home. circa 1921



Doing yard work at age 90 years in suit and necktie



Rexburg Journal typesetting room. Arthur Porter, Sr. in office, Marriner Morrell at cutter, John Porter at table.



Art and Jessie



Louise

Warren, Mary Nell, Ann and
neighbor girl

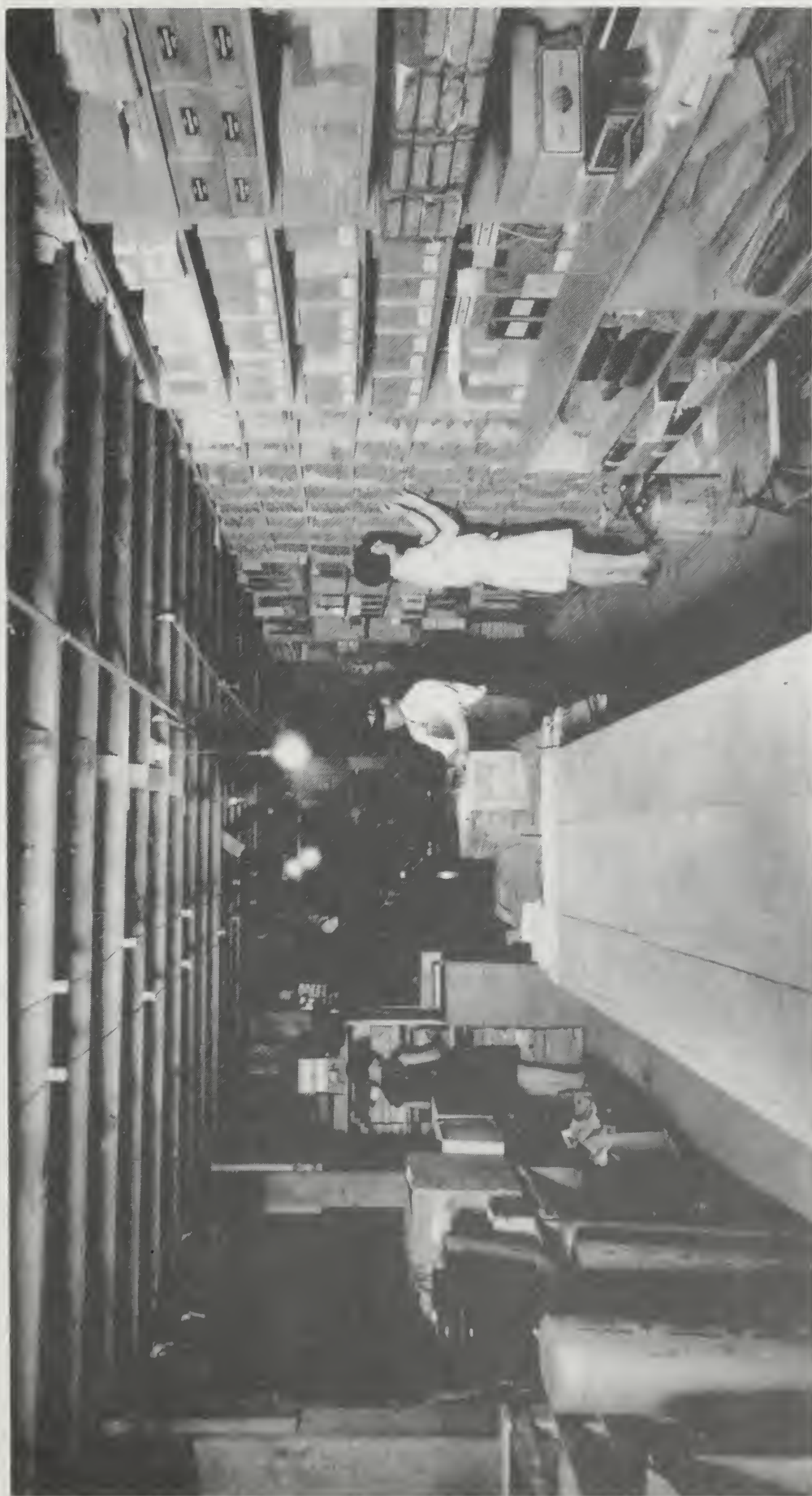


Art, Warren, and baby Ann





Office of Rexburg Journal and Porter's Bookstore. Arthur at desk



Rexburg Journal stock room



Art



Margaret



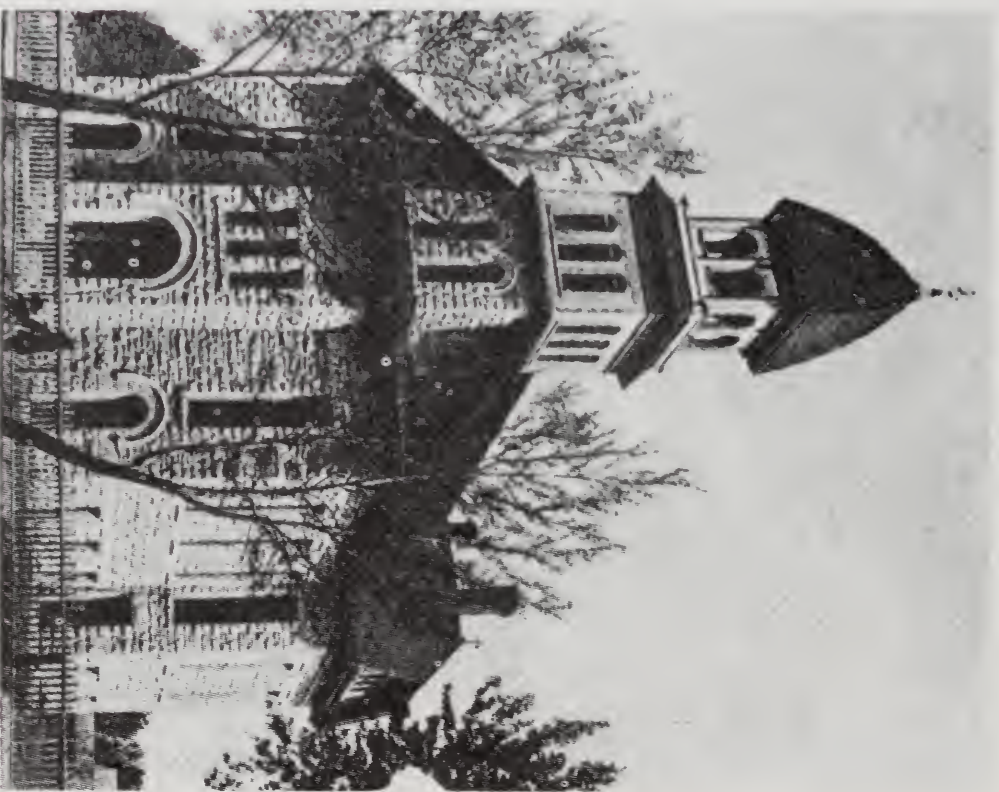
Ann



John



Ann and Mary Nell



First Ward Building



Nelle



Gertrude by school when first teaching



Ann, Jiggs and Mary Nell

Warren guarding birthday cake



Art, Warren in buggy





Art and dog, Jiggs



Arthur with sixth daughter,
Ann

Jessie with baby



Nelle





Arthur on Main Street

Warren



March 8, 1926

President Heber J. Grant
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Brother Grant:

I am directed to send you the inclosed copy of a "Request for Lower Conference Rates" that was drawn up at a meeting held in Rexburg February 4. We have transmitted the original, duly signed, to Mr. Spencer of the U. S. L.

The reason for the delay in getting this transmitted was on account of having to send it to several signers since the meeting. It was thought advisable by those present at the meeting to apprise you of this action in the hope that you could see your way clear to assist somewhat in getting the matter properly considered by the Union Pacific officials. The brethren who were present felt sure that you would heartily endorse this movement and aid any assistance you could in getting favorable results.

Thanking you for your consideration, I am

Your brother in the Gospel,

AP/KG
Enc.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
HEBER J. GRANT, PRESIDENT
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

March 10, 1926.

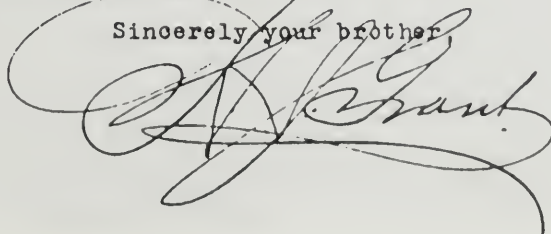
President Arthur Porter Jr.,
Rexburg, Idaho.

Dear Brother Porter:

Please notify the various Idaho stake presidents who signed the petition addressed to the Officials of the Union Pacific System, that immediately upon receipt of your letter enclosing a copy of said petition, I wrote a letter to Mr. D. S. Spencer, General Passenger Agent, expressing the hope that favorable action would be taken upon this petition.

Sincerely your brother

HJG-A





Nelle and four daughters. Nelle, Louise, Mary Nell, Ann and Margaret.

John, Louise, Warren, Art and Jiggs





Virginia



Bonnie Howell



Jessie



Jessie



Jessie



Warren



Virginia



Gertrude



Art



Warren



Ann



Mary Nell



Louise



John

ONEIDA STAKE ACADEMY.

OFFICERS OF BOARD

Geo. C. Parkinson,
President.

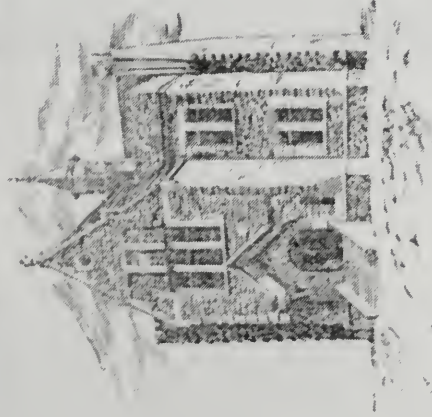
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Preston, Idaho,

190

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Preston, Idaho,

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Stake Presidency: Arthur Porter, Counselor; Peter J. Ricks, President; Oswald Christensen, Counselor; Back - Frank L. Davis, Clerk.

Jessie Morrell, Nelle, Jessie Claire Morrell and Arthur.





Margaret in buggy, Mary Nell
and Ann



Warren, Mary Nell, and Ann,
Margaret on porch in buggy

Warren and John





Chas. Engar

MUSIC INSTRUCTOR

Ricks Academy Studio,
Room 1

Mell Child

Teacher of
VOICE CULTURE
PIANOFORTE

Studio Ricks Academy
Room 2



Early Porter's Bookstore



Child family reunion at Lima, Montana. circa 1936

Left to right - Mary Nell, Louise, John, Grandma Child, Art, Warren





Nelle holding baby, Mary Nell



Mary Nell



Nelle and Arthur in late life

Mary Nell, Gerturde, Keith Zollinger and Arthur







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